



TRANSPORTATION & PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Wednesday, June 23, 2021

5:00 PM

Remote Meeting

The Transportation and Public Utilities Committee will meet to conduct a public hearing on a communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to the first Cycling Safety Ordinance report which analyzes the block-by-block impacts of installing quick-build separated bike lanes on four specific segments of Massachusetts Avenue, as identified in Section 12.22.040 (E) of the ordinance.

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Alanna Mallon	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Patricia Nolan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Timothy J. Toomey	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Quinton Zondervan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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A communication was received from Joseph Barr, Director of Traffic, Parking, and Transportation, transmitting a presentation for the Transportation and Public Utilities meeting on June 23, 2021

A communication was received from the Porter Square Neighbors Study Group, transmitting a presentation for the Transportation and Public Utilities committee meeting on June 23, 2021.

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Jun 23, 2021 5:00 PM (Committee Reports)



CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL
TRANSPORTATION & PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMITTEE
COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER, CHAIR

COMMITTEE MEETING
TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

JUNE 23, 2021
5:00 PM, SULLIVAN CHAMBER

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: Good evening. Um, with that, I call this meeting of the Transportation and Public Utilities Committee to order. Uh, the call of the meeting is to conduct a public hearing on a communication transmitted from Louis A. DePasquale, City Manager, relative to the first Cycling Safety Ordinance report which analyzes the block-by-block impacts of installing quick-build separated by lanes on four specific segments of Massachusetts Avenue, as identified in Section 12.22.040(E) of the ordinance.

Uh, pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, adopted by the Massachusetts General Assembly and approved by the Governor, the city is authorized to use remote participation at meetings of the Cambridge City Council and its committees.

In addition to having members of the council participate remotely, we have also set up Zoom teleconference for public comment. Please be aware that Zoom is primarily being used for public comment. In order to watch the meeting, please tune in to Channel 22 or visit the Open Meeting Portal on the city's website.

If you would like to provide public comment, please

visit the City Council section of the city's webpage. Instructions for how to sign up to speak are posted there. Once you have completed the signup procedure, you will receive a link to the Zoom meeting. We will not allow any additional public comment signup after 5:30 PM.

Mr. Clerk, can you take a roll call of the members present?

City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Present

Councillor Patricia M. Nolan - Present

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey - Absent

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Present

Councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler - Present

Present-4, Absent-1. Quorum established.

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, just FYI, I believe that there are several councillors present who are not on the committee. I see Councillor Carlone, and I don't see any others.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: Thank you. We also recognize Councillor Carlone's presence and thank you for joining us.

Um, with that, all of today's votes will be by roll

call as we start with some opening remarks for the meeting, and then we have a presentation by city staff, and then a joint presentation by some local businesses and residents and Safety Streets advocates, and then we'll go to public comment and then following public comment, we'll go to questions and discussions from the City Council.

Um, so it's a good time to be talking about this given that most of us are going out and traveling more than we have been in the last year and a half. Residents are commuting to work in person. They are going to jobs, visiting friends and loved ones, going out to eat at local restaurants and shopping at local businesses.

And Mass Ave is a central artery, maybe the central artery in Cambridge for residents and other folks getting around the city. And as things are going back up, it's a good time to be talking about its design and traffic management as we can expect to see a lot more people using it in all different forms soon.

Um, this meeting today specifically stems from the city's analysis of what quick build and protected bike lanes could look like on different stretches of Mass Ave, work that the transportation department and others have

done and presented from Harvard Square to North Cambridge and four different sections, as required that was by the ordinance that was enacted last year.

Uh, but it's also part of a bigger conversation, the City Council, city residents, the community have been having about how we should use our streets to support our community.

And while the pandemic has been incredibly difficult, and I--I know we're already to be done with it it's actually shown--shown some great examples of what this can look like on Mass Ave and places like Inman Square with street space, both designed in ways to support local businesses and residents and to make streets safer. And in some cases, the same setups that have been used to create feeding for local restaurants have been used to create protective bike lanes and give more space for pedestrians.

And while any change to streets and traffic patterns requires careful planning, we're lucky that Mass Ave is one of the widest streets in the city. Uh, it's got four lanes per vehicles, two lanes per parking on a number of the stretches we're talking about today, as well as a medium on the parts of North Ave past Harvard.

Um, that's space that can be used to support buses, cyclists, pedestrians and local businesses. Uh, and while Mass Ave is one street, there's a lot of variation on it. So, the contacts matters a lot in terms of the design and I hope we can dig into that some more today.

Um, and while we talk about street design in terms of different transportation modes and making the streets lively and welcoming, I also just want to emphasize that street design is a life-or-death public safety issue. And we've had multiple people killed while walking or biking on the parts of Mass Ave we're talking about today, including Bernard Lavins, Sharon Hamer, and [inaudible 00:09:45] in the past few years.

There's real urgency to this work and I appreciate the time and effort that city staff and others have put into this to meet that urgency and the needs of our residents, our workers, and our local businesses.

Um, so as I mentioned, we're going to go first to city staff, have a pres--presentation and then to a group of local businesses and Safe Streets advocates.

We're going to present jointly. Um, so we'll turn it over first to--to city staff. I know Joe Barr is here with

us. And I also have a note just want to remind folks if they would like to sign up online to speak for public comment, um we'll be doing public comment after those presentations.

JOSEPH BARR, DIRECTOR OF TRAFFIC: Uh, thank you Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler and other Council Members. Um, and we appreciate the opportunity to have this conversation and--and present--present to you.

Um, just in by way of introductions I'm joined this afternoon/evening by, um staff from the-- My department, from the Department of Public Works and from the Community Development Department.

So, presenting with me this afternoon are Kathy Watkins, the--the City Engineer Patrick Baxter, who's our engineering manager, and Brooke McKenna, who's the director for Street Management Trafficking + Parking.

Uh, and we're also joined by the Commissioner of Public Works, Owen O'Riordan; the Assistant City Manager for Community Development, Iram Farooq; as well as the Director of the Environmental and Transportation Planning Division of Community Development, Susanne Rasmussen.

I believe that the city staff who are here and I

apologize to anyone I might have missed.

Um in any case before we go into the details of the MassAve4 report, I just wanted to very briefly go over the progress update report on the cycling safety ordinance that we submitted last, uh--uh, earlier--earlier--earlier this month as it turns out, it was both-- It was--it was technically due at the end of the last month.

We got in a couple days late, but hopefully still relevant for everyone. Um, and--and really what that does is just, it's a requirement of the ordinance. Uh, it provides a an update on the projects we've implemented, the projects we're going to be working on over the next 12 months and then any other sort of information that's-- that's ongoing.

Um, and the only thing I really wanted to highlight in that is just that in the list of projects you can see on the, hopefully on the screen that, you know, our focus over the next year is really on Mass Ave, not the segments we're going to be talking about the rest of today's hearing, but the rest of Mass Ave, which is required to be to have separated bicycle lanes by the-- By April, end of April of next year.

So, we don't have a lot of time to get that work done. Um, so other, and--and then other than the Central Square portion, which is part of a capital project that DPW will be doing over the next few years.

Um, so the like--like I said, as you can see, the--the real focuses on Mass Ave and all these bits and pieces, as well as the more significant segments that are coming up in the near future.

Uh, two, I just wanted to highlight. One is the Mid Mass Ave project, which is the area from Inman Street up to uh--uh, Trowbridge Street which we've been talking about and we're pretty much ready to implement.

Um, the one hiccup there, as we discovered from our contractor really earlier this week that you probably heard that there's been supply chain issues with construction materials up and down the industry. And unfortunately that's--that's also hitting the transportation industry.

So, we're--we're waiting on our vendor and our contractor to--to be able to provide the flex posts for that project.

Uh, so that may delay us a little bit but we are pretty much ready to go with that. Uh, and we'll implement

that as soon as we can, once we have the materials that we need. Uh, and then the other one is just Alewife, sorry, the section of Mass Ave from Alewife Brook Parkway to Dudley Street, which is the one--which is kind of beyond the segments that we're discussing tonight, beyond where the overhead catenary for the track with trolleys exists.

Uh, and although we've not launched the public outreach for that, we are planning to move forward with that in the very near future. 'Cause that's another critical segment, fairly lengthy segment that needs to get done within the next, you know, call it 10.5 months at this point in June. Um, so like I said, Mass Ave is our main focus.

Um, we're also, the River Street Project is also, you know, moving forward and construction should begin within the next within that next year of--of--of time.

Uh, and then there's, you know, bits and pieces here and there that we'll--we'll be getting along the way, all of which we estimate adding up to close to five miles of projects that will happen between, you know, now and next April.

Uh, in addition to the approximately, let me find the

right section here, approximately a little over four miles of projects that we did before this past April.

Um, so we are, you know, keeping on track with the requirements and the ordinance in terms of both, you know, the streets we need to get done, but also the mileage that we need to complete.

Uh, and so, you know, hopefully that--that progress both this past year and in the coming year demonstrates, you know, that we are, you know, obviously taking this project or this ordinance and the requirements of it extremely seriously and, you know, working very hard to get that--get all that--that work done.

So anyway, just wanted to briefly go into that but then jump from there into talking about the, uh--uh, there we go talking about the--the MassAve4 progress report.

Um, so sorry, just want sorry not for progress report, but the impacts report.

So, we went through the progress report, so the impacts report, which again, is the main topic of tonight's meeting.

Um, I just wanted to provide some context before we go into any details. Uh, the, you know, the ordinance requires

us to install separated bike lanes on these segments of Mass Ave as well as the entire length of Mass Ave.

So, I just wanted to make sure, you know, everyone's clear, we--we fully recognize that need we, and we have every intent to do that. Um, and so it's really just a question of--of how we do that and what kind of design choices we make through that process.

But I just want to be very clear 'cause some of the correspondence we've gotten over the last week or so has somewhat questioned whether we were, you know, fully intending to do this and--and whether this was somehow part of some more elaborate attempt to not do it and I just want to be very clear, we, you know, we--we both recognize this is an ordinance requirement, but also that this is the thing that we need to do because it's the right thing to do to make cycling in Cambridge safer.

You know, it is the--the--the spine of--of Cambridge. Um, it is you know, the most significant corridor in the city if not to some extent, even in the region.

Um, and making it, you know, work for cyclists in a safer and more comfortable way is--is incredibly important and so that's, I just want to make sure everyone recognizes

that we--that we recognize that the report we submitted is--
-is not a plan.

It's--it's--it-- And--and what all that you see is all
that we have, we've not progressed to design beyond sort of
cross sections that are shown in the report.

And I'll--and I'll show those in a minute. Um, and it
really is intended as the ordinance requires to look at
what were the impacts be if we were to go purely with a
quick build, meaning just paint and post separated bike
lanes on Mass Ave with no construction at all.

Um, which to be clear we're, we don't think is the
best solution for this corridor and certainly these
segments of this corridor.

Um, and, but we, you know, we needed to show what
those impacts would be per the ordinance.

And so that's really what this report is. We've you
know, we' you know we--we do not intend to implement that
version of the plan unless we're sort of can't get to a
point where we have any other choice, which I hope is not
the outcome we get to over the next year or so.

Um, and, you know, we, it's really the starting point
for our conversation about, you know, how we move forward

with putting in separated bike lanes, what that looks like.

Um, you know, whether parts of it or all of it are quick build, which again, I don't think is the solution.

We think there's going to be the best, but certainly it could be a portion of, it could be quick build, if that makes sense, or how we move forward with construction, which will take more time, but can reduce the impacts some of the problems that people have, you know, rightly identified with the impacts that are shown in that report.

Um, and, you know, that requires us to work closely with the council and the community over the next, you know, 10--10.5 months to get that construction timeline approved by the council.

So, you know, we--we, our intent is that we're going to be working collaboratively in a consultation with the community and with other stakeholders and--and very importantly with the entire City Council to figure out like, what is the best plan?

How do we move this forward recognizing that this is a really important goal and we have every intention of achieving it, but, you know, how do we get to separation on these four segments of Mass Ave?

Um, so the locations we're talking about have, you know, kind of extenuating circumstances that make it, you know, difficult or--or pose in some cases, you know, truly not possible to do quick build.

Um, so they're, you know, they're--they're basically all on Mass Ave.

Um, you know, the two major segments are the from Dudley to Beech Street and then from Roseland Street to Waterhouse, that's A and B on the map.

And then smaller segments near Harvard Square, which are really mostly major bus stops.

Um, and so that's Garden Street to Church Street in the northbound direction, which is, I believe technically Plympton Street but for these purposes, we're going to make it part of the Mass Ave 4 as we turn--as we turn these and then Dudley Street to Plympton Street, which is the area in front of Polio Gate where there's a lot of buses that stop and lay over.

Um, so that's really what we're talking about today. Um, to--to create this report though, we did have to make some assumptions.

So, although this is not a plan for the corridor, we

couldn't really evaluate the impacts without making certain assumptions about what that, what a quick build separated by claim would look like.

'Cause you can't analyze impacts if you don't have at least some sort of plan or concept of what you're going to do.

Um, so in those two primary areas, A and B, which are really the--the most challenging from a, you know, physical perspective, and--and--and, you know, we have a lot of different possibilities, and those are the--the areas where there's catenary wires over the road.

Um, the primary design that we were looking at includes a separated bike lane and then two general travel lanes and--and does require the removal of--of most, if not all, of the parking.

Again, that's not a design that we're necessarily recommending or proposing, but that's what a sort of very simple quick build design for this segment would look like. We also did look at two alternatives.

Uh, one provides a parking lane instead of a second travel lane, and the other, instead of a travel lane, sorry, instead of a parking lane adjacent to the separated

bike lane, we looked at peak hour bus lanes and then off peak loading to accommodate, you know, the need for our transit priority as well as the need for loading along the corridor.

But when we looked at the impacts of that, particularly the traffic and public safety impacts of that it became clear that those two alternative designs were really not workable from a public safety perspective.

Uh, and we'll get into a little bit more about what that means, particularly with, in terms of the impact on the fire department and fire firefighting operations.

Um, but in the end, you know, even though we weren't looking to eliminate those two options, when we really drilled down into them a little bit more, we realized that they were not things that we felt comfortable we could support from a public safety perspective.

Um, so I'm going to switch over to if my--if my computer will allow this to the MassAve4 report. Uh, and just, I'm not going to go in detail about it, I just want to walk people through what's actually in there.

Um, and I--I just want to say for both this report and the--the update report, these are reports--these are

reports that are intended to be reviewed online.

We did provide the council with sort of screenshots of them but they really are designed to be primarily online and to be as accessible as possible, both in terms of the YS audience.

So, they're--they're optimized for mobile viewing, but also making sure they have accessible you know, for--for those with--with disabilities.

Um, so again, just very quick breeze through it. Um, this is a summary of the report. So, the sections that are in there is background information on the ordinance and why this report is required. We looked at general impacts, so there's certain impacts that are felt throughout all of these locations and are kind of categorized into general categories and then location-specific impacts.

Um, so the--the ordinance requires a sort of block by block review of certain impacts. And so that's what we, that's--that's, you know, what that, you know, location specific is really the block by block analysis of things like traffic impacts, parking impacts you know, and it's important to say there's both positive and negative impacts to this.

You know, obviously implementing separated bike lanes makes the corridor safer for pretty much all users, not just cyclists and has other beneficial impacts on, you know, the environment--sorry, travel patterns, et cetera--et cetera.

Um, and then finally in the report we looked it--it provides some more details if anyone wants to, you know, learn more about those alternatives that we, that I just mentioned.

So, the alternatives we considered and then what the next steps are. Um, so as you scroll through the report, you know, there's a bunch of information and maps and you can kind of see it--it--it, as you move through it, information comes and goes.

Um, you know, and there's a lot of detail in here both about, you know, the background, like I said, the general impacts you know, things like you know, impacts on safety for people walking impacts on safety for people who are driving which we also feel are positive impacts on transit.

Um, so again, these are sort of similar throughout the entire corridor, so I won't go through all of those, but that's just kind of a feel for what's--what's in there.

And then you get into the location specific impacts and--and that's where we start, like I said, going block by block. Um, and, you know, this is kind of a summary table of what those impacts are.

Um, and then the only other thing I just wanted to mention is that for each block or each set of blocks to certain blocks are sort of very similar and they're grouped together.

There's both a map view showing kind of the area and--and the parking and other, you know, impacts and changes.

But then also this kind of slider where you can go from the existing edition, which is a Google Street view to what the overlay of what the the--the design with a quick build separated bike lane would look like.

So for example, this is Plympton Street, Dunster Street and Harvard Square. So, this is what it is today. Uh, and then overlay on top of that is what it would be in the future.

Um, you know, with the separated bike lane located adjacent to the curb, again, if we were to do a quick build none of these consider the possibility of any level of construction, which as you'll see later, is something we

feel is, is fairly necessary.

So, anyway, so then you just go through all these lots and lots of cross-sections and lots of--lots of information, so I'm going to scroll down a little bit more quickly this way.

Uh, and then you get to the end of all that. And again, you get into these a little bit more detail on these alternatives we looked at, which I just mentioned and what the--the issues and reasons why we ultimately decided that we weren't going to consider those and then the next steps, what comes next with--with these projects.

Um, so anyway, that's a very, hopefully relatively quick, very quick breeze through what's in the report.

Um, so now we're going to go back to the presentation. I'm going to turn it over to Patrick Baxter to talk about the traffic analysis that was done.

ENGINEERING MANAGER PATRICK BAXTER: Thank you, Joe. So, I'd just like to talk a little bit about kind of the methods we use for traffic analysis and then, you know, what we saw for--for impacts at the locations where we would expect to change the number of travel lanes or otherwise affect the capacity of--of Mass Ave.

Um, so starting off with methods, we analyzed the key intersections. We had volumes from 2016, so they're kind of pre COVID, so we're not including any COVID related volume decreases.

Um, and those were obtained from the mass transit study that was performed in 2016. Um, we put together a traffic analysis model using software called PTV Vistro which is basically a micro simulation model that allows us to kind of model each intersection on a case by case basis and kind of test different scenarios.

And all these analyses are using the kind of industry standard analysis that follows the highway capacity manual methodology.

So, when we're analyzing the intersections, we're kind of looking at two criteria to see, you know, as we change an intersection, how are we affecting this and how is it going to affect people traveling down the road in vehicles and in buses.

Um, so the two criteria that we're analyzing are average control delay, which is the amount of time that a vehicle passing through the intersection is delayed compared to how they would travel through if the

intersection was free flow and there was no traffic signal at that location.

And then the queue, which is just the length of the line of stop vehicles, we look at both the 50th percentile, so they're off average queue as well as the 95th percentile to understand are there locations where that queue would back up past the end of a turn lane or back up through an adjacent intersection, which can cause kind of compounding issues in--in gridlock.

Um, also one other assumption we're assuming in locations without bus lanes those delays and queues would impact the buses at the same level as other vehicles.

While, you know, if there is a bus lane, then obviously that delay that the vehicles experienced would not be experienced by the people riding the bus.

Um, so, you know, in most locations in this report, the alternative that we've discussed removes the parking and maintains the two travel lanes.

Um, this is most locations along the corridor in these locations, we're not expecting any significant impact to delay.

There is certainly the potential that if a vehicle

illegally stopped in one of the travel lanes, you could have kind of short-term delays.

Um, but generally the--the--the street would operate similar to--to what it does today for somebody driving down the street or riding a bus.

Um, so there's two kind of key locations on Mass Ave both in the northbound direction where we do need to remove a travel lane in order to create the space necessary to install a separated bicycle lane.

The first of them is at the intersection of Walden Street. Um, today we have a left turn lane and two travel lanes, the right hand lane being right up against the curb.

Um, so in order to install a separated bicycle lane at that location, we would have to remove that right hand travel lane.

Um, and what we see in the analysis is we'd actually increase the delay for northbound traffic to roughly six times the existing conditions.

So, that's about two and a half extra minutes per vehicle. Um, and the queues go up to about five times the existing conditions, which actually sends queues back through Porter Square and would block multiple adjacent

intersections, which can create kind of safety concerns and, you know, issues on cross streets with people blocking crosswalks, blocking intersections, and kind of other undesirable behavior.

The other location where we have kind of a similar issue with the lack of space for additional bicycle lane is coming up to Johnston Gate just coming out of Harvard Square in the northbound direction.

Um, so today we have two vehicle travel lanes and then a narrow striped bicycle lane.

In order to create the separation for a separated bike lane, we would need to remove one of those travel lanes.

Um, the impacts are fairly similar to what we saw up at Walden Street, so roughly five times or two minutes more for existing delay and queues increasing by a quadruple of what they are today and especially at this location with the new configuration recently installed as part of those Harvard Square safety improvements, that's going to mean that the queues from the signal at Johnston Gate are going to be extending back across the very large, very busy crosswalks in the heart of Harvard Square both on Mass Ave and headed back towards JFK and--and Broadway Streets.

CITY ENGINEER KATHY WATKINS: Hi, this is Kathy Watkins, City Engineer. I'm going to focus a little bit now on the analysis that we did and some the information we really learned about the overhead catenary wires.

Don't know who's clicking at that show. Thank you. So, this is really focused on those same two sections, the A and B, the sort of outer Mass Ave sections. And you know, I think folks know that there's a 600 volt catenary wire system that runs the electric buses.

Um, and that's a critical part of the Electric Quest system, but it does provide some significant challenges and understanding that the Catenary system is owned completely by the MBTA so it's not city infrastructure. And one of the things that really became clear was the impacts on fire access.

So when the fire department goes to go fight a fire and wants to access buildings, operating that ladder is really critical.

And so on a typical street they have a lot of space to do that they can up-- Raise and lower the ladder pretty much at will and can get access to the buildings. So, this is an image on Mass Ave, this is right at Marathon Sports.

And so this is how the fire department sets up on Mass Ave underneath the Catenary Wire system.

So, what they do today is that they pull as close as they can over to that parked vehicle into the bike lane, effectively shut down Mass Ave, but that allows them to get underneath the Catenary system.

And so you can see the ladder is completely to the left of the overhead wires and so that they can raise and lower the ladder truck and reach every different level of the building. And so that's sort of how they operate today. So then we looked at, well, how would they operate if we did sort of the floating parking?

So if you had protected bike lane next to the curb and then you had floating parking and then you had a travel lane, what would that mean for fire access? And so the fire department would be all the way over towards the median.

They could raise the ladder truck over top of the catenary wires as you've seen here today in this image. And so they could reach the upper levels, but they can't reach sort of the levels three, four, and five with the ladder truck.

And so this does not work for them in terms of access

to the building. Um, so they can go over it, but they can't sort of go through the wires. Um, they're generally looking to stay 10 feet away from the wires in terms of safety.

And so they would not be able to access the levels three, four, and five click. Thanks.

Um, so we understand a lot more. What we also know about these two sections is that they're really complicated. So, Joe talked about you know, the--the study of really looking at the impacts of the quick build.

What we know is that the catenary wires really impact what our options are and it's a little less clear than quick build versus construction. And so we really need to spend more time, and this is part of what we'll be doing over the next year, is looking at what are the construction opportunities in this section as well as having more discussion with the MBTA about what, if any, are the options around the catenary.

Um, so it's not exactly clear that just moving the catenary out into the middle lane if that was feasible and possible and we could work that out with the MBTA does not address getting access back and forth to bus stops.

So, it's a fairly complicated system. So, our--our

goal is really over the next year consistent with the--the ordinance is to look much more deeply at what the construction potential are and more details on the catenary go ahead.

And now I just want to talk a little bit about the two sections right in Harvard Square. And so I think this we have a much more, a better understanding of what those two sections the opportunities are.

So again, these have always been identified as extremely difficult in terms of the key bus stop operations and that you really can't have an effective bike facility with that heavy bus stop with through quick build.

And so we know that we need to do a floating bus stop and really provide safe accessible sidewalks, bus operation and also a protective bike lane.

So, the next slide, and so this is an image of what that would look like, this is an image from Western Avenue and so what we are looking for is coming back to the council with a construction timeline and are looking to really include this section in Harvard Square as part of the FY '23 and FY '24, 5 year plan and through the city's capital planning to be able to do construction so that we

can really address these two segments in a way that really works.

Um, the other thing we wanted to do is just really talk a little bit about you know, construction. So, we've talked about there's some pieces that we need to move forward with--with construction.

Um, and so I think we've talked about this before is that, you know, construction provides a lot of opportunities to provide, you know, high quality bike facilities and also a lot of other amenities and improvements.

So, pedestrian improvements, addressing the street paving issues improved storm water management and really provide significant communities to proceed with some construction. Next slide.

Um, so I could, I--I locked up first. Second. We also know that construction can cost significant amounts of money. So, we can be talking \$2 million, \$20 million, \$200 million depending on what the scope of the project is. And so it's important as we look at prioritizing construction projects and it's really done through the five-year plan as well as through the city's overall capital planning.

Next. Um, and one of the reasons we really think about that when we look at some of our larger projects like River Street, Western Ave upcoming work right in Central Square, a lot of that work is coordinated with our heavy utility projects because it's really an opportunity to make significant improvements to our infrastructure.

So, both sewer drain and water city infrastructure and really improve how those utilities work for the community and provide better services, improve water quality, really looking at improving, continue to make improvements to the water quality of the Charles River and have a much more comprehensive approach.

Next slide. And then as we start to look at some of these pieces, one of the things I just really want to emphasize is that it can be difficult to do a little construction.

So, I know sometimes we'll talk about, oh, can't we make this improvement here or make this improvement there?

And it's really important as we look at construction that we think about what is the overall impact of that construction and so that can be very challenging when you're looking at existing utilities.

This is a photo from Cardinal Medeiros and so if you think, oh, if this was a location where we wanted to do a little bit of construction such as put in a catch basin, it can be very difficult to do that because you're going to run into a lot of utility conflicts and so the scope of the project can grow quite significantly.

Next. The other thing we have in terms of scoping projects, and this is where we really need to get into the details of what's possible in terms of construction and what does the scope of construction really look like is what are the existing utilities.

So, if we think about a street that has a, you know, a hundred year old plus water main or gas main and we're doing construction in and around those, then we really want to be looking at upgrading that infrastructure as well.

So, from the water perspective, it's the right thing to do from a gas perspective it's also a legal requirement under State Law that if we come within a certain distance of older cast iron gas means that we need to be working with the gas company to replace those.

And then we just want to touch on really quickly sort of other priorities that we're looking for as we're

thinking about the sort of public space and right of way.

So, think a little bit about trees, transit and outdoor dining.

Um, so with trees, one of the things, the image on the left is an image from the five year plan and the urban forestry master plan that shows priorities for tree plantings and also identifies cool corridors, which are the black lines sort of running, you know, across the--the city.

And what you see is that those overlap very closely with the bike priority lanes and that--and that makes sense cause that's where people are, right?

It's where people are walking, it's where people are biking. Many of the streets are where people are waiting for buses.

And so those are really key priorities in terms of street trees and providing cooling, cooler streets for people to sort of walk and bike and joy.

Next. Um, this is an image, hopefully people have seen this before. It just really highlights the importance of tree canopy on how streets feel.

And so on a typical 90 degree day if you have pretty

much minimal tree canopy, that street is going to feel like 98 degrees if you're walking or biking along that street, if you can get the tree canopy up to 60%, it's going to feel like 88 degrees.

So there can be sort of a 10 degree difference in how the-- Those streets feel.

And so it's can be a really significant benefit. Next. I'm, now going to turn it over to Brooke who's going to run through some information about transit and then also outdoor dining.

BROOKE MCKENNA, DIRECTOR OF STREET MANAGEMENT: Great, thank you, Kathy. Um, so anytime we're redesigning a street, we definitely need to consider what the impacts are going to be on transit.

So, one of the ways that we look to do this is that we've studied locations of delay in unreliably-- unreliability for bus riders across the city specifically.

Um, our colleagues at CDD have done this work. Um, and when we talk about this type of research, we talk about delay and, you know, delay is very common and something you think of when you're on the bus, how much delay am I going to have?

But really reliability is another factor that has proven to be just as important as delay because you know, if you are someone who relies on--on--on buses for your trip, for your commute to work every day and one day it takes you half an hour and the next day it takes you an hour and a half, that's not a reliable transportation system that you can that you can rely--that you can rely on.

So, we look at both delay and reliability numbers. And while this work was done prior to COVID, you know, we don't believe that given the street network in Cambridge that these delay locations will be any different as traffic and uh, use of transit goes back up as we, um resume our travel.

Um, so what we've done is we've looked at this information so that we can identify places for bus priority, that's either dedicated bus lanes transit, priority signals, queue jumps, things like that.

Um, and generally speaking, across the city, the places where we see the most unreliability and delay are month north of Harvard Square the crossings of the river and around the red line stations, we can go to the next

one.

Um, so in the morning in the section of Mass Ave we're talking about today, you can see in red in both directions kind of at the very northern end of--of Mass Avenue near the Arlington line.

You see severe delay but really delay all the way along back towards Harvard Square at different points in both directions.

And, and you can go to the next slide. And then in the PM we see similar and even worse delay uh, particularly heading out towards Arlington both uh, and then also approaching Harvard Square.

But the red really signalize pretty significant delay. So, as we talk about changing our street layouts and we talk about delay for vehicles, we always have to think that that delay is also affecting transit and kind of the multiplier effect that while delay for a vehicle is for 1, 2, 3 people delay for a bus can be for 50 or 60 people.

And just keeping that in mind. And then the final kind of other consideration you know, outdoor dining, since the pandemic has become very popular, we--we hear from the public and from restaurant owners how much they want to see

this continue.

And when we think about the multiple demands on the street, you know, street width is kind of always a limiting factor. Um, and, but you know, we do see really good opportunity for--for separated bike lanes and outdoor dining to coexist.

Um, you know, where we have room for floating parking, we have room we typically would have room for dining.

So, if you can move to the next slide you can see here just a sample of what something like this could look like where we're able to share kind of what could be the parking lane between you know, dining at the curb and then a separated bike lane to the outside of the dining.

So, this is something that, you know, it's--it's always going to be a case by case basis based on street with but you know, we do see good opportunities for this as well as we move forward and I will hand it back over to Joe as we talk about next steps.

JOSEPH BARR, DIRECTOR OF TRAFFIC: Sure. Thanks everyone. Um, so very quickly and then we're we'll be done is just to talk about next steps.

Um, as I've alluded to a few times by next April we

have to come to agreement with the council on, you know, particularly anywhere where we do need to do construction.

So, for example, those locations in Harvard Square that Kathy mentioned, where I think we--we--we do recommend or--or do say that we need to do construction.

We need to, you know, work with the council throughout these--these locations to figure out a construction timeline or figure out if--if these can be done as quick build.

Uh, and then for anything that is going to be quick build. If--if--if anything is selected for that method, then those have to be done by April 30th, 2023.

Um whereas anything that is construction will have worked out that timeline. So that's a timeline that will, that--that is still to come. Uh, and then if for some reason we cannot agree on a construction timeline or do not get approval from the council by April 30th, 2024, we would have to install quick build se--separated bike lanes on all of these segments.

And so, basically that's a kind of, you know, end result that I don't think really anyone wants but if we can't agree to that construction timeline by--by next

April, then--then we have two years from that point to put in separated bike lanes that are equip built.

Um, and so that's--that-- Like I said, that's not the outcome we're looking for and I don't think it's the outcome anyone else is looking for but that is kind of the--the end result if--if that agreement isn't forthcoming.

Um, and then obviously, like I said, if we do agree to a construction timeline to be determined on those segments that require construction then that--those--those--the--the due dates will be part of that agreement and we'll have that information available at the time that--that agreement is put together.

So, I think it's really important just to end by saying we recognize that there's an ongoing series of conversations with the community, with, you know, stakeholders in general, the council specifically local residents along these segments to figure out, "Okay, what are we actually going to be doing and--and actually come up with the best plan we can for putting in separated bike lanes balancing impacts and schedule and safety and all the other factors that we have to take into account, along with all the considerations that Kathy and--and Brooke mentioned

as--as well as probably many others."

Um, and so, you know, that's our task between now and April 30th, 2022, is to figure out the actual plan. Again, this was not the actual plan.

This is just sort of a--a starting point for those conversations and so people can understand what it would look like if we were to do sort of typical foot build along the--along these--these segments.

Um, so with that, I'll turn it back to Councillor and what--whatever that comes next.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: Thank you. And thank you to City Staff for that presentation and for all of your work on this. Uh, really appreciate it.

Um, we're going to go now to a group of residents who include local business owners and Safe Streets advocates. Um, they include Ruth Ryals, Jeanne Oster, Katherine Beaty, Steven Beaucher, and Janie Katz Curtis[phonetic].

Um, they have a--a PowerPoint presentation and I'm going to share it on my screen. Uh, and if folks can just say "Next slide," we can go through it. Um, we'll do that now. Just a second. Okay, great. And then I will turn it over to Ruth, who I think is going to start.

RUTH RYALS: Yes. Can you hear me?

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: We can.

RUTH RYALS: Very good. Um, we're calling this North Ave--North Mass Avenue Roadway. Roadway is kind of a significant term here because I think one of our problems is that the street as it currently exist and when I hear Joe Barr and the Traffic Department, I'm a little worried about the emphasis on getting vehicles through here, cars and trucks.

And the reaction of a lot of the people you're going to hear from shortly is that we need actually to step back and try to have a genuine design that features the length of the street from Harvard Square out to Dudley as a series of neighborhoods with a lot of very unique shops, retail shops, dining shops, the kind of places that we have all thought of this section of Cambridge--that we think of when we look at this section of Cambridge.

If you go to the next slide, just by way of introduction and I'll ask each of the people when they begin to speak to introduce themselves, but it's a wide range of business owners, bike safety committee people, and the PSNA, which I'm the president of.

But in comes right out of our presentation and our work in trying to form a working group to look at this and work with the city on it, is comes out of a committee meeting or a PSNA meeting we had in May, where we looked at what the city had dropped as the, some referred to it as a plan, but at least the report.

Um, which scared a lot of people a lot, especially a lot of business owners, because it basically said, "Here's what happens if you take away, if you put the quick build bike lane all along that section of the avenue, that in essence you wipe out all business parking and you wipe out loading zones and you would have a terrible impact, of course, on the economy of some very significantly already struggling small businesses who've been through COVID and trying to come back up again.

Um, but I also want to stress that it's a bigger meeting and a bigger community than that. The CLF, the Cambridge Local First city conversations community conversations tomorrow will be discussing the same topic and we want to be talking to residents and truly looking at a way in which we can work with the city to look at each, if not block by block, but at least segment by segment so

that we know the character and what are the possibilities to make this all emphasize, again, not just a throughway that we're looking at, how fast can we get cars and trucks through here in four lanes but how can we recognize that this is a city neighborhood, this is in fact our community center running through it and we need to make it more welcoming, more tree-lined, more planted, more art.

Um, we want to look at a lot of design possibilities, including the taking down of the crumbling and ugly median, putting in its place, islands at places, putting in more crosswalks, putting in places for pedestrians to feel safe, perhaps art paintings along, uh--uh, if you have up a, I will use the wrong term here but not a Ballard but if you have a post there, you could have it.

Yeah, almost a--a project by Leslie students to keep them painted. Um, but we will be having a conversation and we hope that the city will have that conversation with us about how to change the character of the roadway and not give so much emphasis in this section of Mass Avenue to just moving cars and trucks through, including the potential of narrowing the number of traffic lanes and we also want to make sure that the buses are moving through

here more reliably.

The-- I'll just make one further point here and that some of this and my history with it goes back to a group called Mass Avenue Improvement Committee, where we tried-- we worked with the city, I think, pretty successfully over a number of years to improve the street scape of Mass Avenue from Harvard to Upland.

And we had scored sidewalks and the brick edging and much larger sea, uh--uh, street tree well and much bigger caliper trees planted. And that section is better now, better feel to it.

We also put in place at Shepherd Street and Mass Avenue and also in front of the Vivia we put in planted in seating arrangements.

We were trying, again, to make the avenue much more welcoming and much more of the kind of place we are all also comfortable biking, walking, or going and parking to go to our favorite businesses, retail shops, restaurants.

And we look forward to working with the city to continue that kind of planning. Next slide, please. In essence, what we want, the whole working group and the-- As I emphasize, we come from very different segments, business

owners and bicyclists and vehicle drivers, pedestrians, neighbors.

We want to promote a--a vibrant and thriving business area that's designed to draw shoppers, diners and other customers to the area so they can experience a--a variety of offerings and that they look at it as we do as a community center.

We want to solve the urgent bicycle safety problem on Mass Avenue. Nobody wants any more bicyclists killed we want to improve the reliability and speed for bus riders because the more we can reduce the car traffic, the better we're all going to be.

And when you want to create a safe and friendly pedestrian experience throughout and one way we do that, of course, is having more crosswalks and safer crosswalks and we look forward to working with the city contextually, looking at a block by block or blocks by blocks and in close coordination with the community to try and find solutions that achieve our goals as well.

Next slide. And at that--this point, I'm going to hand it over to Jeanne Oster, who's the owner of Guitar Stop, and just Guitar Stop.

And she will tell you a little bit about the response she's had from businesses on the report that the city traffic department dropped.

JEANNE OSTER: Um, can everybody hear me okay? Yeah. So, I own Guitar Stop. Uh, it was originally started by my father in 1962.

Uh, the pitcher up on the--on the side there with all of us was on our 50th anniversary and my brother and my nephew and myself and then my sister, Annette, is to my right or left, whatever.

Anyways, so we were-- My dad started the store in '62. We were in Central Square until '87 and then we've been in relatively the same area for the last 34 years.

And I was not aware of--of this bicycle plan until Ruth had sent out an email a couple of weeks ago. And when I looked at the plan, the impact study, I'm sorry, it's not a plan, it's an impact study, it did not mention economic study at all. It--it didn't take into consideration how harmful it would be to the location.

The stores located from Harvard Square to Dudley Street. There's a-- Everywhere I was not aware of it, I thought my sister and I wrote up flyers and we went handing

it out to different stores.

And the reactions we got were, "First I'm going-- I have to move, re-jogging." Um, I'm--I'm going to be out of business if they remove all the parking. There's not enough parking as there is right now.

And the majority of our customers, you know, we do have people who walk in, we have people who bike in, but they'll-- I have customers just yesterday who walked into the store, dropped off a guitar, and then it's like, "Well, I have to come back with my car to pick it up."

That happens all the time. Or they have customers that go by the store and they said, "Oh, I found a parking space. I've been going by your store for months and I haven't been able to stop. So, I haven't shopped here."

And to--to vote in this ordinance in 2020 without contacting the businesses, having an input on the businesses to see how devastating it would be to not have parking.

We want bicyclists to be safe, but we don't want to kill our businesses in the meantime and we don't have any other alternative to--to replace the service of the customers. It used to be, well, you could sell online, but

now Amazon kills the online business. If people can't park, they're just going to order online. It's more convenient. Grubhub kills the restaurant business.

It's--and then the other thing I wanted to point out that people have said to me is they have signed leases. They have a 10-year lease and the lease they signed said that it had parking in front and that's why they changed that--picked that location and signed that 10-year lease.

If they don't have the parking, then they're going to end up suing the city for taking away their parking and ruining their business. Um, they said they had 90% of their business drives in for it. We have customers from all over, not just people who can walk or bike, and even the people who can walk and bike say, "Well, we'll be back. We--we--we got to get our car to pick this up."

Um, you know, and it is just a very frustrating that after we go through a year and a half of having store closing or we're not getting inventory delivered because of--of the pandemic, then it's like, "Okay, now we're going to take away your parking. Good luck to you."

So, it's--it's--it's-- I can't stress enough how devastating it would be to all the small business up and

down the street. Um, in some other locations in Cambridge, they have parking lots that you can park.

And--and then I've also heard, "Oh, this happened to me in Inman Square. I woke up one day and all our parking was gone." So, it's--it's really a huge problem and it's a very upsetting to me and to the everyone that I spoke to.

And we went up and down the street from Harvard Square to Dudley on both sides of the street, my sister, myself and my nephew, handing out flyers and that people were not aware, they couldn't believe that they're doing this to them.

So, many stores have gone out already because of the pandemic and we should be supporting the stores not killing them. And I guess, I think that hit everything that I wanted to--

RUTH RYALS: I talked about your petition, how many of them you had.

JEANNE OSTER: Oh, so we started a petition just two weeks ago, just after Memorial Day. And we had-- And just in my store, we had 18 pages of signatures and then 58 signatures online.

And that was just in my store because when we went up

and down the street, we handed out flyers, telling them about this meeting and we also handed out petitions for people to sign it and send back in.

And whether they do that or not is awesome. Is that everything, Ruth? Did I cover everything?

RUTH RYALS: You did. Thank you very much. Thank you. I think from a business standpoint, it's also important to note that whatever you do in terms of construction, you've got to think about the retail businesses.

And across the board, their single biggest time of trying to make some money back will be fall and Christmas.

JEANNE OSTER: Thank you.

RUTH RYALS: So, we need to make sure that you keep that in mind.

Uh, I know that they've practically laid siege to the traffic department once before when they tried to do some construction right in the fall as they were beginning to ramp up sales toward Christmas. Next slide. And--

KATHERINE BEATY: Oh, yeah, that, well--

RUTH RYALS: Excuse me. Katherine, you want to just go ahead and introduce yourself? And Steven, who's the owner of WardMaps, you want to introduce yourself as well?

KATHERINE BEATY: Yeah, I will. I'll go first and Steve will join us on--Steven will join us on the next slide.

Um, hello, my name is Katherine Beaty. I live in North Cambridge and I commute with my three children by bicycle to Davis Square to drop my twins off in at daycare. And then I go to public school to drop off my son on range before traveling down Mass Ave to work in Harvard Square.

I'm very familiar with this stretch of road and the challenges faced by cyclists. My partner was hit by a motor vehicle who was turning right over him to go to the gas station on Walden.

I am volunteering with Cambridge Bicycle Safety because I want to make Cambridge a place that my children can safely explore on their own, on foot or on bicycle when they're old enough and not in decades from now when they're adults.

It's unfortunate that the City's impact analysis implied that the only way to add separated bike lanes to North Mass Ave is to eliminate all parking.

While the analysis of impacts was done block by block, the application of one single design to every block ignores

the--the varying abutting land use in community preferences.

The City's analysis did not consider more context sensitive designs that change block to block and even within blocks as they have done in other projects.

There are in fact, quick build options illustrated in the diagram here that would work along Mass Ave by utilizing a menu of options such as creating a single travel lane with left turn lanes where needed, dedicated bus lanes at traffic lights and creating additional parking or loading zones for businesses on side streets.

It is critical to all of us that the city considers such context sensitive designs, design options moving forward.

Um, next slide. So, in addition, we feel the City should consider removing the median, which would provide the necessary space to allow for protected bicycle lanes, a parking lane, two lanes of vehicular traffic in both directions of Mass Ave, which you can see here in this cross section.

If changes to the medians are pursued, this need these--these needs-- One second. If changes to the medians

are per--pursued, this would happen.

This should happen with minimal lightweight construction project as the city recently did on Benny Street not a lengthy full depth reconstruction for both bicycle safety and businesses.

A lengthy construction project is not a viable option. And now I'd like to pass it to Steven.

STEVEN BEAUCHER: Hello, my name is Steven Beaucher. Everyone can hear me good?

RUTH RYALS: Yep.

STEVEN BEAUCHER: Yep. So I own Ward Maps and MBTA gifts right in the middle of the avenue between Cambridge Common and--and Porter Square.

I've had my retail business there about 10 years. I've also been a neighborhood resident of Azis. I've been there about 18 years with my wife. Uh, so I see the avenue from very a lot of perspectives.

I bike on it, I drive on it, I park on it, I walk on it, I tea on it. Um, I use it for my business, so it's my livelihood. I-- But I'm also a resident of the neighborhood. Uh, so I'm--I'm--I have a vested interest like many of us do in the avenue from many perspectives.

Um, I like, you know, what, Mr. Barr mentioned that he described this as the, you know, the center or the spine of Cambridge. If that's really what it is, then what it is right now is essentially a--a poorly designed highway that is dangerous for many of us.

Uh, many of us walking, biking, even driving. Um, I've been hit by--I've been riding my bike for Inman Square and I was hit by a car there. Um, so we've all had those experiences. We know the failings of this roadway and as a business owner, I'm 100% in support of a protected bike lane.

I am not in support of removing the ability for people to park. Um, when we think of a complete street, we think of something like in this diagram, where there's travel lanes, there's parking lanes, there's protected bike lanes, there's sidewalk canopy over a really nice sidewalk.

I feel as if this is the opportunity for Cambridge and all of us to continue our collaboration, which is towards, I think, the same goal, a better avenue, a real avenue, a city center not a high speed, dangerous corridor.

Um, and, yeah, so that's my thoughts for that. Uh, next slide.

RUTH RYALS: Steven, you might just point out that how much of your traffic of your customer base actually drives in from quite a ways out and picks up heavy things.

STEVEN BEAUCHER: Yep. So, I have a local, and thank you to everyone who shops with us locally, but I also have an international audience.

And before COVID, I had people who would fly to Logan. They would take the train or they'd rent a car and they'd come to my shop because we'd do some things that you can't get anywhere else.

Um, part of the reason why I opened my business in Cambridge was because of Cambridge being a place where you can often, and sadly less and less so, find something that you can't get anywhere else sometimes in the world.

Uh, and parking is vital to my retail business. You cannot take a 200 pound MBTA sign that I sell and take it on the bus or on your bike.

But with that said, every day I watch someone tie up their bike in front of my shop and they come in. Uh, people come in with their bike helmets all the time.

It's how I shop too in Cambridge. So, I want to have that--that place for the bike to be there safely, but I

also want to have a parking space for that customer of mine who arrives by car.

I think the avenue has a lot of width. As these diagrams start to get into, there's a lot of width here. Get rid of that median.

You can't drive on the median, you can't park on the median, you can't safely bike or walk on the median. Let's use that real estate for something better.

KATHERINE BEATY: Was that a challenge? Um, Steven, I can--is that 200 pounds by bicycle? I'll--I'm going to work on that.

STEVEN BEAUCHER: Okay.

KATHERINE BEATY: Okay. Certain sections--certain sections of North Mass Ave could be fitted with priority bus lanes, especially leading up to traffic lights to allow queue jumping by prioritizing public transit and creating safe conditions for cyclists, the city would encourage more people to make the modal shift to more sustainable forms of transportation and ultimately make our city more livable and along Mass Ave create a desirable destination, not just a traffic [inaudible 1:08:36]. Steven.

STEVEN BEAUCHER: Yeah, and I think there's more

opportunities beyond the perimeter of the Avenue. Um, I know we're--we're getting--getting into some more intense studies, uh--uh, like the city has mentioned and that's great.

Um, but if--if, let's just say that all the parking is removed, that's an area that I'm keenly interested in. Uh, if that remove--is removed from the Avenue, then perhaps some of the first block--block or so, or first few parking spaces of each side street can be turned into--into public parking that's during the daytime.

And then at night it reverts back to permit parking that happens in the south end in Boston. Um, it's a good balance if you need to make Broadway improvements to make it safer but you can't fit parking on the street.

Um, also as Jeanne from Guitar--Guitar Stop mentioned, we have no municipal parking lots in this section of Cambridge. So, Central Square, even if you--they got rid of all the street parking, which they didn't, there's still meters in Central Square, Central Square is blessed with a couple municipal lots, even a garage.

We have no alternative. And as a business owner I support bike safety, I support road safety transit, we got

to get everything going.

But if you take away the parking, you essentially take away what makes the avenue interesting, a lot of the independent businesses. And I--I don't think the City of Cambridge is proposing a public parking garage.

Um, I--I'm not proposing that, but yeah, the parking has to be part of the has to be part of a complete street. Next one.

RUTH RYALS: Just one point, Steven. Um, even if we did the--some commercial parking on the side--on the some of the residential streets during the day, that doesn't actually help one segment of the businesses.

That is the restaurant trade, people like Julia, for example, who rely on an evening, they don't even open until 5 o'clock.

So, they aren't present in our presentation, but I want to just speak up and say that they have to be con-- considered as well.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: Probably just want to jump in a note. We're past 6:00, and I know at least one committee member has to run it at 7:00.

Um, so I think there's--there's one other presenter

but if we can try to--to wrap it up, we still have public comment in the--the council piece.

RUTH RYALS: Okay, go ahead, Steven. Wrap it up.

STEVEN BEAUCHER: Um, you could go to the next slide. I'm good, thank you.

KATHERINE BEATY: Okay. And the median does create a refuge point for pedestrians attempting to cross four lanes of fast moving traffic.

One benefit of adding parking protected bicycle lanes is that it effectively sh--shortens the distance people need to travel to cross the road by creating pedestrian islands as sort of refuges at the ends of the parking lanes.

As you can see in the top image on the right. At certain crosswalks, such as at Garfield Street, a center refuge island could be created as you see an example on the bottom and the cross section is--is demonstrating that as well here. Steven.

STEVEN BEAUCHER: Thank you, Katherine. I'm good for expedition, we'll go to the next slide.

RUTH RYALS: And I can just wrap it up here by saying we'd like the City to consider using some of the following

tools and there are many more.

Allow the businesses to expand, the street parking area--into the street parking areas. Everyone has fallen in love with outdoor dining and it has certainly helped the bottom line of a lot of our restaurants.

Uh, use the side streets for commercial use during business hours, which we've mentioned, provide more crosswalks and raised crosswalks to slow traffic.

Integrate community art by introducing some art designs on that segment that you, or whatever you replace segments of the median with eliminate the median in some places while maintaining it in others.

And I would say rebuilding it as islands not maintaining it as it exists because it's quite ugly and deteriorating, put the avenue.

And lastly, I think we seriously need to put the avenue on a road diet, narrow where we can, traffic lanes slow down some of the speeding traffic, all of us who work and eat and along that avenue know that we have some people who go great speeds up and down the Avenue.

And most importantly of all, simply work with us because we know our local businesses, our local

neighborhoods and it's got to work for all of us. Thank you very much.

KATHERINE BEATY: There's one more slide.

RUTH RYALS: One more slide. I'm sorry. Judy--Janie, go ahead.

JANIE KATZ CURTIS: Hi, I am Janie Katz Curtis and I live in Porter Square. I have for about 40 years now, plus. Um, my husband and I along with our now our three now 20 something children young adults bike, as well as walk and use transit extensively throughout Cambridge for transportation and shopping and everything which we've done for our children's whole lives and long before them.

So, I know this area very well. I feel like I'm a generation ahead of Katherine, but so I've been watching this for a long time.

So, in closing her presentation, I want to emphasize that we need to make sure that the business's interests and needs are addressed along with the very, very, as Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler introduced this, the urgent need to prevent more deaths on our streets.

None of us want lengthy construction periods, which will harm businesses and delay safe infrastructure. Um, our

roads are extremely hazardous for cyclists and pedestrians.

This map, which is a little hard to see on the left shows just the reported crashes between motor vehicles and bikes or pedestrians.

And we know that this is just the tip of the iceberg because most crashes are not reported, even those that have had terrible impacts on victims.

Um, our--our city's walkability and bikeability are among our greatest assets. And the city wisely promotes the--promotes that for many reasons, including environmental and economic sustainability.

And we don't want residents, visitors or employees to be driving more respondents to all sorts of surveys including current cyclists, people who want to bike or are related to those who want to--to bike, beg literally for more bike infrastructure.

Um, so it is morally imperative that we provide as soon as possible infrastructure to keep our more vulnerable users safe in doing what we all want and need for them to do.

So, I think that together, all of us who have just spoken are urging the city to find a way to do the right

design in this area in both the short and long term to keep us safe, keep our children safe, keep our parents safe and to enable our businesses to thrive. Um, thank you.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: Great. Thank you. I'm going to stop sharing the screen. Um, we have now to public comment and focusing on not speaking, um those were great presentations from city staff and from residents.

Um, bringing did take out a bit of time and I think we have 11 folks signed up for public comment. Uh, so I'm going to ask if we can limit public comment to one minute each so we have time for council questions and discussion.

Um, Mr. Clerk, do we need a motion for that or is that the--at the discretion of the Chair?

CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON: Uh, we'll need a motion. Chair can make the motion.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: Great. Um, I'll accept a motion from Councillor Nolan and to limit public comment to one minute.

City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:

On limiting public comment to one minute:

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - No

Councillor Patricia M. Nolan - Yes

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey - Absent

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - No

Councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler - Yes

Yes-2, No-2, Absent-1. Motion failed.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: Okay. In that case we'll have three minutes for--for public comment as is the norm. Um, Mr. Clerk if you could start with the public comment.

CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON: The first person signed up for public co--public comment is Jeanne Oster.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: Um, Jeanne was one of the--

JEANNE OSTER: Yeah, I was one of the speakers, so I-- I'll give up my time. Although I do want to say that we get customers--international customers, local customers from all over and they are coming specifically to our store, but I'll give up the rest of my time. Thank you.

CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON: Next speaker is Tim Keith.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: Please go ahead to be on the--the Zoom.

RUTH RYALS: Tim Keith did reach out to say that he would be listening but not able to speak tonight. So, we

can go to the next person.

CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON: The next speaker is Albert Duarte.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: Albert, please go ahead if you are on the Zoom.

RUTH RYALS: Albert Duarte, you are unmuted and you do have the floor. Please go ahead.

CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON: He appears to be having some technical difficulties. I see that he's unmuted but I do not hear any sound. The next speaker is Christopher Cassa.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Christopher Cassa, address not provided, spoke as a person who had business in that zone. And that Mass Ave is a very dangerous place to walk through or to bike, especially as you got Porter Square and the stretches discussed through Harvard. He was happy that people were able to come to an agreement about reasonable solutions.

Rebecca Newman, Concord Ave, stressed enough about how important the street is for Cambridge and how important it is for her that it be safe for biking. She is constantly on high alert both because of the risk of car drivers opening

their door into the bike lane and there's quite a few Ubers and Lyfts on Mass Ave that are constantly going in and out of the bike lane. So making sure that it's separated is super important.

Amy Kin, address not provided, noted that she had lived in Cambridge for over 40 years and never had a desire to bike around Cambridge because it's dangerous, although some steps have been taken. She was relieved to hear at the beginning of the meeting that the plan by the city was not a final actual plan because it's so complicated and it's so heartbreaking to see the disregard for our small businesses in that plan.

Gleb [inaudible 1:24:49], address not provided, said he bikes from Central Square, where he works at Workbar, to Sherman and Huron and his wife takes electrical scooter from home to her work in Somerville. But every time he bikes and take Mass Avenue, I know it's dangerous and he can die because it's heavy traffic, wide traffic lanes and lots of lots of people biking, walking and lots of suddenly opening car doors too. And he cannot believe there is no good solution to put a protected bike lane there.

Further said it's unfair to people and it's even bad

for traffic in our city because every cyclist means less traffic in front of you and keeping things the same would not work in the future because the streets cannot scale infinitely if more people drive. Only public transportation and personal mobility devices like biking, walking, scooters would solve the problem.

Mark Boswell, Porter Square neighborhood, noted that he gets around primarily by bike, and does all of his errands, shopping, most of it on Mass Ave by bike. Urged the City Council and Staff to remain committed to the timeline that is laid out by the Cycling Safety Ordinance. He was also very glad that the ordinance brought this discussion before them now and that they're taking a very serious look at it. He would very much like to see these changes made at some point within his lifetime.

Randy Stern, Cambridgeport resident, noted he cycles often on Mass Ave, and his son lives in Davis Square, probably two or three times a week he bikes along Mass Ave and it's incredibly unsafe. He felt protected bicycle lanes would allow him to extend his life. Stressed it's urgent to meet the city's strategic goals for climate change. He was happy to see what the City Staff presented and thoughts

about North Mass Ave. He encouraged the city to seriously come up with some plans that would shrink the street and make it more neighborly and do it quickly. He fully supported the city in exploring options that would meet the needs that the Porter Square Neighborhood Association for a safer street for pedestrians, shoppers, cyclists.

Julia Hansen, Somerville border, noted that she only owns a bike and that's her main way of getting around for basically all year. The reason she showed up at this particular meeting today and wanted to give a comment is that she had been hit by a car while biking around the city, but more specifically, only a couple weeks ago she was biking up Mass Ave from Harvard to Porter and she was nearly crushed between a U-Haul and the parked cars. And she was really encouraged to hear the support from Mr. Barr, and the Porter Square Neighbor Association had some great ideas.

Nathanael Fillmore, address not provided, he just wanted to briefly speak and talk about the reports analysis. There have been some good suggestions raised in regard to what can be done if removed and the canary wires for the bus are either removed or adjusted. The design

itself is really naive and simplistic and not something that the City would realistically ever implement. No other project has the city ever just like nuked all parking on a corridor or applied the same design to every block, pretty much or the entire corridor that would never be done. And a lot of the impacts that were discussed and the alternative that were rejected would seem to be potentially mitigated with a more sophisticated and context sensitive design and he gave a couple of examples.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: Mr. Clerk, is that all for public comment?

CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON: We're going to try and go back to Albert Duarte.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: Albert, if you're on the Zoom, please go ahead.

RUTH RYALS: Albert Duarte, you are unmuted if you wish to speak. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, they have not unmuted themselves on their end, so perhaps they cannot or no longer wish to speak.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: Thank you. Um, is there anyone else for public comment, Mr. Clerk?

CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON: There's no one signed up--

there's no one else signed up for public comment.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: Okay, thank you. Um, we can go now to council questions and discussion, but I believe we first have to--to close public comment. Um, it's on a motion from Councillor Zondervan. Um, Mr. Clerk, could you take the roll?

CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON: On that motion to call--

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Point--point of order, Mr. Chair. I believe we don't actually have to close public comment, can just leave it open.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: Mr. Clerk, could you clarify?

CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON: I couldn't hear. I--I'm sorry. I couldn't hear the question.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: The question was whether we--

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Oh, sorry. Um, I--I said that we don't have to close public comment. We can just leave it open.

CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON: We can, yeah.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: Okay. Um, if we don't need to, it seems like we're--we're done. Um, so that

makes sense. We can go right to--to the questions and discussion. Um, sorry, there's three councillors with their hands up and I missed the order. So apologies. We'll go first, uh, the Vice Mayor Mallon, and then to Councillor Nolan.

VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON: Uh, Councillor Nolan had her hand up first, so I'll yield to her.

COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN: Thanks, is that okay, Chair?

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: Yes, please. Yeah.

COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN: Thank you, Vice Mayor. I think we were close to simultaneous. I am so thrilled to be in this meeting. I appreciate all the presentations, the city presentation, and I particularly appreciate the groups of Cambridge Bike Safety, the small businesses and Port Square Neighborhood Association coming together to really talk about the hard issues of how it is it that we can hold all of these needs together.

And I think my--my question is why wouldn't we follow that lead? Um, I-- It seems to me that what was presented by the group of the small businesses in PSNA and Cambridge Bike Safety were exactly the kind of thinking that we need

to address here.

Several of the designs included everything that we have been asking for, which is protected bike lanes, the length of Mass Ave helping small businesses by continuing to allow them to have their loading zones, their parking. It would also allow for the continuation of the the--the dining in the streets and the using of some of the street parking for, for restaurants.

I--I don't understand why we would not do everything we possibly can to do the quick builds everywhere we can. I also agree completely that the median should either be a completely redesigned tree, well just the entire length of Mass Ave, every single possible place.

If we can't put trees there, then eliminate it and use that extra space for the for the bike lanes and allowing for the, um for the addition for--for the continuation of some parking and some travel.

So, I am a hundred percent in favor of those designs over what the city has been working on, because it seems to me they can be done quicker, they can be done cheaper, and they can provide exactly what we've been asking for.

Um, so I--I--I--I think one question is how advanced

are the discussions with the MBTA about the catenary wires? It seems like those discussions that already have happened and either of the designs where there's only either one traffic lane down most of Mass Avenue, and then at the corners there's either left lane or right turn lane for just half the block, seems to me to be a brilliant and quite doable solution or to keep the two travel lanes, but then make sure that there's parking allowed by re--re--reducing the median.

And in some cases, the sidewalk is wide enough. So, I really hope that we get there. I hope it, I--I don't think we need a five to 10 year construction plan. I am in favor of using quick builds everywhere possible and--and--and moving forward as--as soon as possible on that.

So, I--I--I would hope that we would move forward with that as soon as possible.

And--and I hope the city, if they haven't seen these plans, I'm very interested in understanding what their take on that is.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: Thank you. Um, Councillor, did you have a direct want to response from council or should we go to other Councillors from Staff?

COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN: I'm happy to-- for--for you. It's up to you, Chair. If--if it makes better more sense for the staff to just hear from a few Councillors and--and--and--and basically queue up all the different questions, we may have similar responses.

It may be more helpful that way. I--I--I do appreciate this conversation and I'm very interested in totally supportive of that bike lane all along Mass Avenue, and I don't think we have to sacrifice all the parking or the ability to travel, and I'm not sure we need to continue to have two lanes, the length of it, if--if--if we wanted to have an incentive for traffic to go elsewhere.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: That makes sense. Yeah, I think we can hear from other Councillors and then go back to staff. Um, so we'll go now to--to Vice Mayor Mallon then, and then to Councillors on now.

VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON: Oh, thank you, Mr. Chair and through you to the City Staff. I am glad that we're here having this conversation. I think starting this conversation now is--is critical.

Um, I do think it was unfortunate the way the report was presented because it--it did seem to be inflammatory

given that, you know, it wasn't that block by block analysis.

And I understand that as part of the ordinance, the report was necessary. But I--I hope that when we get to different segments as we move through the cycling safety ordinance, that we can take the lessons that we've learned from this report coming forward and being just, we're removing all the parking on both sides all the way down and just seeing what has happened in the fallout and just learn from it and--and be able to present the information in a different way or--or come up with a different process.

If, you know, if something needs to be changed in the ordinance in order for us to do that, then--then let's talk about that. Um, I am--I'm glad to hear and thank you to Ruth Ryals for pulling everyone together and, and really talking about Mass Ave as needing a road diet.

I think that we all, every, all of us on this call probably agree that it is like a highway in the middle of our city. And you know, I think the median actually really contributes to that in some way. Um, first of all, it encourages bad behavior, both for drivers, cause it feels like you're on a--a really fast road when you're actually

in the middle of somebody's neighborhood.

Um, at the council level, we get hundreds if not more emails every single year about pedestrian safety and how it's just not safe to cross Mass Ave even with a flashing blinker because people are just going too fast and I think that the median contributes to that.

At the same time, I think I--I definitely-- I'll say that I'm, I do this all the time where you see that median as a pedestrian, you're not going to walk the half block to go to the crosswalk.

You're going to go 'cause you can dart onto the median and be safe and then cross the other way. So, I think thinking about that median as being something that we need--definitely need to think about removing, we should definitely do that.

Um, I--I do want to go back to this. I, I'm a plus one on--on Councillor Nolan's question around the conversations about the catenary wires and where we are on that. However, you know, when I'm looking at the schematic and the width of a--a, you know, a typical fire truck, which is 10 feet, there is room if you put a bike lane and the buffer for the fire trucks to come down and be in that bike lane in that

buffer zone, yes, I-- As Nate Fillmore said," they--they do need those supports."

But where are those hollow sidewalks and can that be thought about in that block-by-block analysis or can we fill them in? Right? I mean, we've been filling them in on Mass Ave and Central Square. Uh, there's ways to do it. It is a little bit expensive, but should we have hollow sidewalks just period.

Um, so thinking about things like that being creative, I think you've--you've seen-- I think for City Staff, we-- we're at a place right now I--I actually think is exciting. We've got small business owners, we've got residents, we've got cyclists, everyone's kind of on the same page here that there's plenty of room to--to work with.

Um, people are willing to be creative and people are willing to give up a little bit of parking and moving some of that parking to side streets. Uh, I think we have a really great opportunity to have this kind of collaborative group work together and get this done cause this is a really, really dangerous stretch of our city roadway. And it would--it would--It's going to be hugely beneficial for us to meet our climate goals to have separated bike

lanes all the way down.

But also as Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler mentioned in the beginning, this is-- People die on our streets, right? It's scary out there. Um, and so we need to be--we need to be working with some urgency here.

And I am glad that we've got this collaborative group together working with some urgency around solving this really critical issue in our city. So, I'll yield back at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chair, for the--for the time.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: Thank you. And it was pointed out to me by City Staff and Councillor Zondervan, that we have school committee member Ayesha Wilson in the--the Zoom and had her hand up and Councillor Zondervan agree asked if we could--could go to her first for a public comment and then go back to him if that's possible Mr. Clerk?

CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON: I believe she should be able to speak now.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: All right. Uh, Ayesha Wilson, please go ahead if you're in the Zoom.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Hi, couldn't find my mute button? Are folks able to hear me?

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: We can hear you.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ayesha Wilson, North Cambridge, she noted that she wanted to speak as a resident of the North Cambridge area and a person who really supports their small businesses and who has traveled up and down Mass Ave. But she emphasized that there is a need for some more time, some real care--carefulness in terms of how they actually go about a project this large in their city and how that's really going to impact their greater community, especially North Cambridge area of the community.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: Thank you. We're going to go now to Councillor Zondervan.

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Um, I--I share many of the same sentiments as my colleagues. Um, you know, as a bicyclist I've been doored myself on--on the roads. Um, and I think in this really encouraging the way this--this conversation is been happening so far 'cause we're hearing a lot of creative solutions, which I think is exactly what we need. Um, the one--one question, and again, I don't need an immediate answer, but I--I would like the staff to consider

that the, you know, the analysis assumes the same traffic patterns as if they're static.

But--but of course we know that if we change the roads, then the traffic patterns adjust and--and if we take away lanes or--or make adjustments that people find other ways to get around including not driving. So, I would like to have that be considered as part of the analysis instead of just assuming that the same number of cars trying to get through fewer lanes.

Um, and particularly as--as we continue to add bus priority lanes and--and flight protected lanes, we should see a--a mode shift away from individual cars. Um, similarly when we look at--at the parking issue. Um, and--and I do want to give a--a shout out to the guitar stop 'cause I--I actually bought my guitar there a few years ago, but of course I can park on the Side Street because I have a residence sticker.

Um, and so the idea of having some metered parking along the side streets is a good one. And--and I think we--we really underutilized that in Cambridge. Now, I do hear from the restaurants that it doesn't address their situation.

Um, we have similar concerns in--in Eastern Cambridge, but my belief is that fewer and fewer people are going to be visiting restaurants in Cambridge with a private vehicle and--and looking to park for--for many hours.

Um, because we will again have many more convenient options. And of course, when--when one goes out to dinner, there's simply no need for a car, right? If you're buying a guitar or something like that.

It's more understandable that people would want a car to transport something large. But when you're going to dinner it's a night out, you know, people can drink and--and not worry about having to drive and all of those things.

So I think the--the restaurants will--will find that their customers will still come. Um, and then my last comment is that, you know, I--I too am frustrated by the way this--this report was dropped.

I--I understand that it's essentially just complying with the ordinance, but I think the way it--it came across was--was a little off. And in particular, I--I don't see it as an either or to do quick build or full construction. I think we may--we may have to consider both, right?

And--and again, there's--there's some case by case scenarios here, but in order to get this segment of Mass Ave implemented, we may have to do some or--or even all quick build in the short term and then in the longer term replace it with--with more permanent construction. So, you know, I would like to see that option considered in--in this report, in this segment and--and in future reports as well.

And so, again, really encouraged by this conversation by the way, the businesses and--and residents came together to present some real solutions and I hope that we can hear those and--and that the traffic department can come back with--with some more practical proposals for how we can get our bike lanes implemented quickly and--and improve safety for everyone without unnecessarily impinging on the--on the businesses. Um, thank you, Mr. Chair.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: Okay. Thank you. Well, good. Uh, to Councillor Carlone, I think we do need to first have a motion to extend the meeting after the committee with that.

Um, so with the-- a motion from Vice Mayor Mallon to extend the meeting by 15 minutes. Um, Mr. Clerk, could you

roll?

City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:

On extending the meeting to 7:15:

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Yes

Councillor Patricia M. Nolan - Yes

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey - Absent

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Yes

Councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler - Yes

Yes-4, No-0, Absent- 1. Motion passed.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: All right, thank you. And Councillor Nolan, we'll have a quorum, if you do leave, have to leave at 7:00, so no worries, and we'll go now to Councillor Carlone.

COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE: Uh, thank you, Mr. Chair. Um, any complex project is not solved by a simple solution. And you-- we've heard today how complex it is. It's even more complex if it's a state road. And the state I assume will be involved in any kind of redesign, but Joe Barr and his staff can answer that later.

I lived in this neighborhood for the last almost 40 years. I know it intimately. Um, I had to fight to get a crosswalk at Garfield Street, believe it or not, uh, back

when--when I first moved into the neighborhood.

Ruth Ryals' comments, I totally agree with. Um, and that's the point, everybody is right. And to think again that a simple solution would resolve that is--is, as the Vice Mayor said it, the--the City Public website probably should have had a caveat that said, "This doesn't work or it doesn't fully work."

So, number one, half the traffic in the city doesn't end here or begin here. So, if we did reduce the road width, a road number of roads, Central Square has three active roadways looking at all the directions. Um, much of Harvard Square now has similarly number of roads. Um, Arlington from the city line up to Arlington Center is three lanes.

Um, I--I think yes, it's different in Cambridge, but is it that different? Um, I think that has to be thought. Number one, the sidewalks are not reinforced. I learned this one with Ruth Ryals. I was part of the Mass Avenue Improvement Committee, and we learned that the city does not put reinforcement bars into the sidewalk. We could talk later about why, but they don't.

Um, this is an urban design problem. It isn't just

traffic. Everybody recognizes that 'cause community development is here as--as well as DPW on top of that. And that includes all input, all needs need to be resolved, and that's why it will need to be studied in depth.

The interesting thing I see is that the width of Mass Avenue in this part of the city, my neighborhood, is pretty close to what it is in Central Square. Um, look at it. I mean, that's--that's where we're heading one way or another.

So, I think it's a retail issue, it's a business issue. It's obviously transportation issue, which is leading the pack. It's putting pedestrian improvements in. By the way, when you put rest places for pedestrians, sales go up 10%. It becomes a more attractive place to be. And that's the goal, as my neighbors have said that.

How can we make this work and make it a place for people to be and not through traffic? Uh, all the Councillors talked about this. Yes, we have slow traffic at time--at times. Other times we have speeding traffic and kids cross Mass Avenue to go to school all the time. I had a friend whose child was almost hit by a car, they notified me of that. Um, the vice mayor mentioned crossing

midway of the block.

Well, of crosswalks are 800 feet apart, 500 feet apart. You're going to walk across that damn median and a real thriving retail area has crosswalks at 200 feet. Um, so this is very complex, has to be done right. We have to make it safe for everyone, and I mean bicyclists as well. And I think we'll get there.

I think what the transportation department has done is said maybe only now, but they knew that this, their propo-- What they showed us in the analysis wouldn't work and that we need to do it correctly. Um, I'm for doing it correctly. Thank you for letting me speak, Mr. Chair.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: And pointed out to me that there is one person who would sign up for public comment who wasn't available before but is on the--the Zoom now. Uh, and that's James Williamson. Um, it's possible that--that James--

PUBLIC COMMENT:

James Williamson, North Cambridge, noted that people talk about the various constituencies that have been involved and that are important. But he sort of feels like one very important constituency that are left out are those

of them who take public transit. He also noted that there's been some restoration, but the ideal is to move forward with improvements in service that would include things like bus, rapid transit, dedicated bus lanes, buses, being able to change signals when they ride the bus now at night.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: Thank you, James. And we're going to go now to City Staff for additional comments. Um, Mr. Barr or Ms. Watkins, go ahead.

CITY ENGINEER KATHY WATKINS: Thank you. So, I think I'll start and then with a few follow up comments and then turn it back over to Joe.

So, a couple things about I think a number of the cross sections that folks showed. I think there are certainly ones that we've looked at from Mass Ave at various times over the years.

I think one of the things we would just really emphasize is that they don't fall under quick builds. So there's a lot of options there and there's a lot of potential.

But a lot of the things that we were really talking about tonight in terms of opportunities for removing the median, opportunities for, you know, or enhancing the

median with tree plantings or, you know, other sort of larger scale more comprehensive improvements really fall much more under, you know, the slides where we talked about construction.

So, again, I just really emphasize that some of these small things aren't really feasible when we look at a corridor like Mass Ave, we look at, you know, the medians have traffic signals on them that starts to require other work.

If you look at, you know, a--again excavating your utilities, what are the other improvements that we need to think about? So, I think, you know, if we're talking about a full construction project, that's a very different scope. So, it's sort of looking at the challenge is really looking at what are the impacts of quick build versus what does a full construction project look like?

Um, and again, there's the city infrastructure and I also just want to talk a little bit more about the catenary wires cause some of the--the options that again, I think make a lot of sense when you look at Mass Ave don't work with the catenary wires for the buses and so, and the fire department.

And so again, we just want to keep coming back to that. Um, and you know, we talked a little bit about sort of the next steps and over the next year is to really dive more into those issues and think about what are the options?

And are there places where we could do construction? Are there places where, you know, we can work with the MBTA on the modifications to the catenary? I don't know if that's feasible. That's part of a conversation. We're working with them on other streets, it can be quite challenging.

So, I don't want to be, you know, that is not a short process. Um, and I think as we're looking at these types of construction, these are not-- They're big benefits and you can really do the comprehensive work that I think, you know, Ruth talked about and if you go back to the work we did with her and Councillor Carlone on the Harpo block, you can get a lot of benefits, but it is a different sort of animal than quick build projects.

And then finally, just with the fire department, just to clarify, so there are no hollow sidewalks in this section of Mass Ave the fire department doesn't necessarily

know where they find hollow sidewalks.

And so there's sort of standard protocol is that they don't put outriggers on the sidewalk because we do have hollow sidewalks in some locations in Harvard Square and Central Square in particular.

And then there's also issue around damaging sidewalks and then also other conflicts with sidewalks if there's outdoor dining or other things that could constrain their access. And so there's-- their protocol is to not put the outriggers on the sidewalks even but I did want to clarify that there's not actually hollow sidewalks in this section of Mass Ave. So, I think those are the things I wanted to focus on. I'll turn it back over to Joe.

JOSEPH BARR, DIRECTOR OF TRAFFIC: Sure, thanks, Kathy. Um, through you, Councillor, to the group. Um, I guess just a few other things to add or, well, one to reiterate, which is I just want to make it clear that, you know, the--the design options that have been, you know, shown, I think these are all things we've--we have, as Kathy said, you know, talked about both over the years, but also specifically in terms of what we think would be potential, you know, better options for Mass Ave.

So, I think it's not that we're--we're ignoring those possibilities, but A as Kathy said, some of them are actively in conflict with, you know, the continued you know, existence of the catenary and B you know, I think we--we, and this, I know this is a delicate topic, I know this frustration amongst Councillors about how the-- This report was presented, but I do think it's important to say that, you know, the ordinance also contains the sort of what I described as a kind of poison pill, which is if we can't agree on the-- What the actual plan is going to be and--and it, if that involves some construction, then we are required to do this by, you know, some version of a quick build by 2024. And so I think it's really important for everyone to understand what that could look like.

Again, I'm not saying we would do it exactly as that report lays out, and I'm not saying we wouldn't apply any additional, you know, thinking or--or thoughtfulness to the project, but at some level there are certain fixed items that we have to account for and--and that we don't have a lot of flexibility or control over, like the catenary.

So, I just think it's really important for folks to recognize that we--we--we don't intend that to be the plan,

but it is important to understand that, you know, that is kind of a--a starting point and--and-- But hopefully not an ending point.

Um, but we are certainly open and--and have talked about a lot of the different possibilities that--that were presented. Uh, you know, earlier I guess the other two things, one is just, you know, reemphasizing, you know, the transit piece because, you know, I think it's--it's--it's-- We're--we're more than okay with looking at things that, you know, reduce capacity for cars and--and--and trucks acknowledging that there are potential impacts associated with that.

But like Councillors on demand said, "You know, people do change their behavior." Um, and you know, we're--we're-- We've I think shown in other projects that we are willing to, you know, suffer additional vehicular delay if that's what it takes to make a roadway safer.

But we are also very sensitive to needs and not, you know, pun--punish transit in that process. And so we--we need to look very carefully and deliberately with the MBTA about what we can do to make sure transit continues to work well because just as much as this part of Mass Ave is an

important bike corridor, it's an incredibly important transit corridor, you know, with one of the highest ridership routes in--in the entire system.

So, we just need to be really sensitive to--to that issue. Um, and then finally, I think, you know, we--we do want to lay out a process going forward over the next, you know, I would say probably six to eight months to have all these conversations in more detail.

Um, recognizing that, you know, by April 30th of next year, we not only need to present a plan to the council, but we also need to get the council to, you know, approve that plan and--and as much as it involves construction.

And so I just you know, I do want to be very respectful of the fact that, you know, we need to give the community enough time to react to, you know, different ideas and give us their ideas and, you know, have that conversation.

But then we also need to give the council, you know, the--the opportunity to discuss debate, have further meetings of this committee and possibly others to, you know, come to agreement on that plan.

So, you know, we are-- We don't have those, the

specifics of those next steps laid out, but, you know, we are having internal conversations and then we'll want to talk more with the council about exactly what that process looks like cause that--that really is the crux of the issue in listening to all the comments throughout the course of tonight's meeting is that, you know, people want to engage.

I mean, in a way it's great that we have--we have all these folks engaged who really want to work with us to come up with good solutions and are--and are open to the idea of, you know, more significant changes to--to North Mass Ave, which is not always, to be honest, been the case.

Um, and so I think, you know, it's--it's--it's, you know, I'm--I'm--I'm excited that we have such an engaged community. The council's engaged, you know, businesses are engaged and--and we sort of have the--the--the--the pieces we need to be able to have that conversation over the next several months and then come to agreement with--with the council.

So, I think, you know, it's, I--I recognize, like I said, the frustration and--and the desire for--for more, but I think we are here to--to have that conversation. And this is the beginning of that conversation in--in no

way, shape, or form. And I have everyone realizes this, it's not the obviously the end of the conversation. Um, so, you know, we look forward to those con--to those discussions over those the next several months.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: I see the Vice Mayor and Councillor Zondervan have their hands up. Um, I think we will need to extend the meeting to, to collect those comments. Um, so if we could extend for another 15 minutes, Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:

On extending the meeting to 7:30:

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Yes

Councillor Patricia M. Nolan - Absent

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey - Absent

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Yes

Councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler - Yes

Yes-3, No-0, Absent-2. Motion passed.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: Um, and I saw Councillor Zondervan with his hand up first, and then the Vice Mayor Councillor Zondervan.

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Um, through you to--to Mr. Barr. Uh, I wonder if you

could address just briefly the timing and--and the possibility of doing some quick build and then coming in later with more permanent fixes.

Because I--I am concerned that, you know, if we say we can't do quick build and we have to go to full construction, then that puts us out, you know, five or 10 years from now, which is not what we're looking for. So, I--I'm just trying to understand how much flexibility we have here.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: I mean--

JOSEPH BARR, DIRECTOR OF TRAFFIC: Oh, yes. Uh, through you, Councillor. Um, I guess what I would say is that we're certainly open to looking at that and also, so looking at, you know, what elements, even if we do say that some amount of constructions needed, what elements could be done as quick build versus what elements, you know, do require construction.

You know, taking into account the fact that, you know, maybe there are locations where it's easier to trade off some of the factors or the--or the bus delays aren't as significant. And so we can kind of work around that.

So, I think, you know, we--we recognize, you know, and

I think it's the council and the community have being clear about the need for speed not of cars, but of--of implementation. Um, and sorry for the terrible joke.

Um, the but I think, you know, we--we do want to make sure we're doing our due diligence. So, I think part of that conversation over that next several months is to figure out, you know, sort of-- Kathy may--may punch me later for saying this, but sort of what is the quickest build we can do, even if that involves, you know, some construction, but you know, are there--are there things we can move more quickly?

Are there things we can do that can be temporary and then, you know, come back later? And I think just to say with all of-- And I know Councillor Carlone has--has mentioned this point several times in the past with all of our quick build projects, our intent over time would be to come back and build those out, you know, in a more permanent way.

You know, 'cause I think we all feel like the quick build is--is a, you know, sort of just a-- It--it--it's a necessary thing to get these things done quickly, but--but the full build versions are--are better for a variety of

reasons.

Um, and so again, that will take a long time given the, you know, the--the cost and--and construction and complexity involved. But, you know, our intent would always be eventually that we would come back and make--make these improvements in a more permanent way.

So, I think it's really just finding that balance on this specific corridor between, you know, what can be quick built now and built out later versus what really needs to be built out at this moment in time.

I-- The other thing I just want to say, and apologies for going back to a previous point Councillor is that, you know, the other element that's really uncertain for us is just the future of the catenary in general.

'Cause as I think most, many--many Councillor are aware, you know, the MBTA has proposed to eliminate the catenary and--and eliminate the current track with straws and replace them with battery electric buses.

But that's a controversial decision that I--I know the council's also weighed in on. Uh, and so I think we're-- we're-- I wouldn't say we're in a holding pattern, but it does sort of add one more element of complexity in the

whole question because we don't actually know if, you know, may--maybe--maybe that goes away in--in some not so distant future, or maybe it doesn't. And that's--that's a complicated decision that again, we don't have control over.

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you. Um, would--so would you present another or--or a plan to us next? I guess we're not calling discipline, but how--how do we advance this conversation with them?

JOSEPH BARR, DIRECTOR OF TRAFFIC: Um, to--through you, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, I--I would say that, you know, we--I wouldn't say the next step, the next episode we not to present a plan.

Next step is to engage and, you know, some additional discussions. The community with all the stakeholders that have been, you know, attending tonight and--and--and many others, I'm sure.

And, you know, better understand. I mean, I think we've got a good feel for obviously some of the concerns and none of them are, you know, particularly shocking or surprising. But, you know, have those conversations, try to

better explain kind of what the different, you know, constraints and you know, opportunities might be.

So, I--I think it'll be a little while before we're coming back with a specific plan 'cause there's a lot of analysis to be done and, you know, Kathy alluded to a lot of that in her presentation.

But, you know, I think that we would--we would want to have those conversations then come back with a plan sometime, you know, again, with a-- I--I don't want to say a specific date--date--date or month, but with enough time that we can then have, you know, the discussions we need to have with the council.

Uh, so we're not putting everyone in a difficult position of having to, you know, vote for or not vote for, you know, a construction timeline or whatever it turns out to be at the very last minute.

You know, 'cause obviously that's, you know, April 30th is the deadline, but you can't--we can't expect to come to you on whatever the Monday right before April 30th is and, you know, with the plan at that point and that you're gonna be willing to say. Yeah. That's great.

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Great. Thank you,

Mr. Chair.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: Vice Mayor Mallon.

VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON: Uh, thank you Mr. Chair. That was really my question is how this, you know, conversation proceeds and more specifically how Mr. Barr and Ms. Watkins envisioned themselves working with the working group that has kind of come together.

'Cause I think that is a really powerful dynamic and I'm just curious if there's any thoughts about how that will be moving forward?

CITY ENGINEER KATHY WATKINS: Um, maybe I can take a correct step through Mr. Chair. Um, I, you know, one of the things that's clear, and again, the way the ordinance is laid out was sort of this first thing is focused on quick build and then the next year is to really look at-- Okay, so what are the impacts that-- You know, understanding the impacts of quick build, what are the options for construction to try to better articulate?

What that means and what those opportunities are? And so we're in the process of getting some technical assistance on board so that we can have a consultant that'll work with us to really look through more of these

details so that we can really understand what the impacts are on utilities, what the opportunities are, but understand what the scope would look like.

Is this-- you know, I go back to this 2 million, 20 million, 200 million, we need to understand what we're talking about when we talk about construction, be that a little construction or a lot of construction, what that looks like in terms of what a real scope would look like.

And then also try to piece together that. So it's sort of a--a little bit of a way of saying, you know, we need some more technical assistance to really start looking at those details so that we can have more substance to really have a--a conversation with folks.

And so that's going to take us a couple months before we even really be able to start to have that conversation in a meaningful way that really says, you know, these are what the opportunities are, understanding what the costs are and what those tradeoffs are.

VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON: Uh, thank you Mr. Chair through you. So, it sounds like those conversations need some technical assistance, then you'll reengage with the-- the stakeholder group or the working group that's been put

together and that we would likely have another transportation committee meeting.

Um, and that four months or so maybe they--they set up--get set up quarterly until this process has gone through because I think there's a huge desire, I think you're probably hearing from the whole committee to be kept up to date and not be surprised about sort of what is happening.

So again, thanks to everybody for being here tonight and participating. Um, I yield back. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: I had just one brief additional follow-up question, uh, and that was thinking about how Mass Ave plays into the--the wider network. Um, it's a big project on its own, it also sort of creates other opportunities for connecting the broader cycling network, sustainable transportation network.

Um, as we're adding these bike lanes, whether they're--they're temporary or permanent protective lanes, are we thinking about how it's connecting to--to other pieces? Um, I'm thinking in particular, like there's one small section of Somerville Ave that connects to Mass Ave that doesn't have a--a protected bike lane yet, right, by the target?

Um, could staff just talk a little bit about how that thinking has happened?

JOSEPH BARR, DIRECTOR OF TRAFFIC: Um, sure. Um, and I guess well that--that--that--that specific segment actually as of very recently does have, at least a--a portion of it now does have separated bike lanes.

We actually were able to take advantage of the MBTA's work that they were doing on the retaining wall at the Porter Square State Commuter Rail Station. And--and although it's-- there's-- It's a very short segment that's actually in Cambridge as opposed to in Somerville, we actually did put in some--some separation there.

But I think, yeah, I mean the bike, you know, the Bicycle Network Vision kind of is our guide for that. And although, you know, it can be-- some--sometimes these projects are somewhat opportunistic or, you know, based on other things happening in the area.

And so there are elements of the network that are kind of disconnected at times. I think we are also trying to look more at, particularly as we get more of these larger segments done to--to--to, you know, connect things in some logical manner so we're not just having these kind of, you

know, a--a piece here, a piece there.

You know, so obviously it's a major construction project, but, you know, I think having River Street, you know, as the pair to Western Ave when that--when that project is done, you know, is a really important addition to, you know, creating a connected network.

So, I think we are increasingly trying to look at it that way, particularly as we accelerate the pace of implementation so that we're able to get more done and we can kind of pick up pieces that are missing along the way.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: Thank you. Vice Mayor Mallon, did you have a--another question or was that an--an old hand?

VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON: I have an additional question, Mr. Chair, if you don't mind. Um, I know a number of the business owners had sent in written testimony to Patrick Baxter for this meeting and did not include the City Clerk. Um, they may not have been aware of the process of how to get those communications on the public record.

I'm just wondering if the Clerk could let us know if there was any way we could get those emails as part of the public record as part of this meeting. If there's a way to

do that? If there's not, then he can probably let us know, but I'm--I'm assuming there's a way to do that.

CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON: If Mr. Baxter or the--or the, um, business community members emails cityclerk@cambridgema.gov by midnight tonight, those items will be included in the record.

VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON: Um, thank you, Mr. Chair. Through you to the Clerk, then the business owners would have to be watching this meeting right now and understand that they needed to do that.

I'm just, I don't want to put more work on Mr. Baxter's plate, but if there was any way to forward those on to the City Clerk, just maybe in a bulk batch or something, just to have them as part of the record before midnight.

JOSEPH BARR, DIRECTOR OF TRAFFIC: Yes. And sorry to interrupt, but I think I-- Mr. Baxter just said he did not, actually-- He texted me to say he did not actually receive any emails directly.

So, it sounds like they either were sent, I know there was a whole series that were sent to--to the council as well as myself and the City Manager. Um, but it doesn't

sound like there were any, were sent directly to him.

CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON: If--if they were sent to the--the Council email, I--I believe I can get them through the City Council office. So, there are any emails that are out there, we can, uh, try to collect them from the various city departments.

JOSEPH BARR, DIRECTOR OF TRAFFIC: Okay. We may also--

JEANNE OSTER: I--I sent those emails. Is it possible for any one of you to email me the address that I'm supposed to send it to? If you just emailed to guitarstop@hotmail.com, I can forward the emails that I had sent anyways. I had sent the--the 18 pages of petition, the 58 online petition. So, if somebody emails me the address to guitarstop@hotmail.com, I will forward on what I'd sent.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: I can email you the--the Clerk's address, Ms. Oster. Mr. Barr, was--was there something you were trying to add?

JOSEPH BARR, DIRECTOR OF TRAFFIC: I was going to say, they may have gone to our General Traffic and Parking email address, in which case we can see if we can get those along.

VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON: Oh, thank you, Mr.

Chair. And thank you to everybody for taking care of that.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: Great. Thank you. Um, and thank you again to the City Staff for their presentation tonight and for all the work that has gone into this.

Um, thank you as well to the residents, including local business owners, neighborhood folks, and Safety Streets advocates.

Um, as I think we've heard a few different times tonight, this was a discussion about the required analysis of--of one particular option for Mass Ave, but by no means the only option. And we heard about sort of the--the process over the coming months to talk about the different options, including some of what was presented tonight and the discussion with the council and community groups about how to turn that into a reality.

Um, so I'm really grateful to everyone that's come forward to start this conversation and looking forward to keep moving with it. Um, so with that, we can have a motion to adjourn.

VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON: So moved.

City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:

On the motion to adjourn:

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Yes

Councillor Patricia M. Nolan - Absent

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey - Absent

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Yes

Councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler - Yes

Yes-3, No-0, Absent-2. Motion passed.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: Thank you again, everyone. Have a great night.

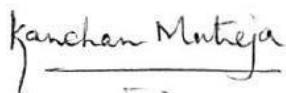
VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON: Thank you, everybody.

The Cambridge City Council Transportation and Public Utilities Committee adjourned at approximately 7:24 p.m.

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, **Kanchan Mutreja**, a transcriber for Datagain, do hereby certify: That said proceedings were listened to and transcribed by me and were prepared using standard electronic transcription equipment under my direction and supervision; and I hereby certify that the foregoing transcript of the proceedings is a full, true, and accurate transcript to the best of my ability.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto subscribed my name this 5th day of March 2023.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kanchan Mutreja". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Signature of Transcriber