

To date there are 42 active boards and commissions, on which hundreds of residents serve. The City Manager's Office has developed and distributed a manual for members of boards and commissions; copies are also distributed to persons who are interested in serving. The City Council received a copy of this manual in December.

A current list of Boards and Commissions include: Advisory Committee on Environmentally Desirable Practices, Affirmative Action Advisory Committee, Affordable Housing Trust Board, Animal Commission, Arts Council and the Public Art Committee, Bicycle Committee, Biohazards Committee, Board of Assessors, Board of Examiners, Board of Zoning Appeals, Central Square Advisory Committee, Commission for Persons with Disabilities, Commission on the Status of Women, Conservation Commission, Consumer Advisory Commission, Council on Aging, Election Commission, Half Crown Neighborhood Conservation District Commission, Harvard Square Advisory Committee, Historical Commission, Human Rights Commission, Human Services Commission, Kids' Council (Coordinating Council for Children, Youth and Families), License Commission, Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission, Peace Commission, Pedestrian Committee, Pole & Conduit Commission, Police Review and Advisory Board, Planning Board, Library Board of Trustees, Public Health Commission, Public Planting Committee, Recycling Advisory Committee, Retirement Board, Traffic Board, Water Board, Cambridge Housing Authority, Cambridge Industrial Development Financing Authority, Cambridge Redevelopment Authority.

There are other standing committees that involve many Cambridge residents, and although not formally appointed by the City Manager, provide advice to the City on numerous programs and projects. These include: Community Schools Neighborhood Councils (14), Pop Warner and Youth Soccer Advisory Boards, War Memorial Advisory Council, Youth League Advisory Committee, Senior Center Advisory Council, Eastern Cambridge Senior Leadership Council, Fresh Pond Golf Course Access Committee, Childcare Parent Advisory Group, Friends of the Community Learning Center, Friends of the Council on Aging, Friends of the Frisoli Youth Center, Friends of the Library, and COP Leadership Council.

- Ad Hoc Committees: These are groups appointed by the City to examine a specific issue or to advance a specific project. Examples of

groups that have been established or have met since July 1, 1997 include: Library 21 Committee, Fresh Pond Master Plan Advisory Committee, Central Square Infrastructure Committee, Fresh Pond Parkway Advisory Committee, Frisoli Youth Center Citizens' Advisory Committee, Taxi Advisory Committee, West Cambridge Youth Center Steering Committee, Homeless Services Planning Group, Neighborhood Study Committees, Porter Square Roadways Design Committee, Cambridge Street Citizens' Advisory Committee, Layfayette Square Advisory Committee, Cambridgeport Roadways Advisory Committee, Cambridge Common Citizens' Advisory Committee, Truck Traffic Advisory Committee, Morse School and Fitzgerald School Building Committees.

- Community Meetings: City staff attend or lead meetings that are open to the public but do not necessarily involve groups formally appointed by the City Manager. Staff literally attend hundreds of meetings in the course of a year, either meetings sponsored by the City or at the invitation of a neighborhood group, business or other entity.

Community Meetings lead by the City are on a wide range of topics including: capital construction -- municipal buildings, sewer and street construction, traffic calming, park rehabilitation, street scape improvements -- consumer issues, housing, human service programs, youth programs, public art, zoning petitions, environmental issues.

Community Meetings which City staff attend are varied and include meetings of neighborhood, civic and business associations, crime watch and safety groups, tenant councils, other public agencies, and environmental groups.

Current Methods Used to Disseminate Information:

The City uses a variety of methods to disseminate information to the public. Most departments have developed individualized mechanisms for getting the word out on its programs and services. Below is an overview, with examples, of these methods; examples used are illustrative and not all-inclusive.

- Newsletters: A number of departments/programs have newsletters including: the Library, Council on Aging, Disabilities Commission, Recycling, the City of Cambridge Committee on Diversity. In general, newsletters are distributed using a directed mailing list and at drop-off

areas. The Recycling newsletter is sent directly to each residence in the City.

- Reports/Resource Guides: The City publishes a few major publications on its operations, all heavily used and important communications vehicles: the Annual Report, the Annual Financial report, the Annual Budget Document, the Department of Human Services Resource Guide, and the newly-produced Boards and Commissions Manual. On a quarterly basis, the Police Department publishes a Crime and Neighborhood Report covering the entire city and each of the 13 neighborhoods; twice a year, this report includes a synopsis of ten designated business districts. The Fire Department also publishes an Annual Report. An interdepartmental committee staffed by the Community Development Department has recently completed a Guide to Permitting and Licensing.
- Direct Mail: Many departments do extensive mailings to residents concerning events, programs and issue updates. Recycling Division sends postcards twice a year. Traffic, Parking and Transportation sends resident permit parking information to all registered vehicle owners; DPW includes information on street sweeping and snow removal in this mailing. Job openings are sent to all active Cambridge job applicants.
- Staff at Public Events: Many City programs often staff tables at public events i.e., Hoops for Health, Fair Housing Open House, the River Festival, Area IV Drug Free Fair, and National Night Out Against Crime, to name a few. Lead-Safe Cambridge both sponsors and participates in numerous public events to disseminate information to property owners, parents and students. The Police Department, using its community services van, also visits special events. Cambridge Employment Program and Personnel Department participate in community events and distribute information on City jobs and other employment resources for residents.
- Inserts in mailings of other organizations: The City often inserts pertinent information about City services in water bills, and property tax and excise tax bills. The electric and gas companies often allow the City space in its bill inserts to disseminate specific information; the Fuel Assistance Program is a noteworthy example. Inserts in the TAB are used. Inserts in paychecks to City employees is also used.

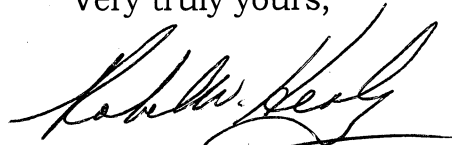
- Work with Community Organizations and Neighborhood Groups: Staff often meet with neighborhood groups and community organizations to disseminate information, discuss projects and initiatives, and/or to ensure that City services are known to and accessible to different communities. The City Manager's Office, Community Development, the Department of Human Service Programs, Department of Public Works, the Water Department, the Department of Traffic, Parking & Transportation, the Police Department, to name a few, regularly use this important information vehicle. In addition, all City job postings are sent to 229 community agencies/organizations every other week.
- Work with Area Businesses/Institutions: The City Manager's Office, the Community Development and Water Departments work with the Chamber of Commerce as a vehicle to communicate with the business community, and have made presentations to a number of business groups. Several departments also meet regularly with representatives from Harvard and MIT to not only disseminate information but also to access Institutional resources (including the student population). On a weekly basis, the Department of Public Works sends construction location updates to all utility companies. The Personnel Department, along with the Cambridge Employment Program, work with Career Source to inform unemployed and underemployed Cambridge residents of job vacancies in City government.
- Banners/Bulletin Boards: Bulletin Boards are posted in squares, parks, and in and around construction sites to keep residents informed of local construction and upcoming events. Banners over city streets are used regularly to announce events and disseminate information.
- Flyers/post cards, brochures: A myriad of flyers, postcards and brochures are distributed regularly through the Community Schools program, at elementary schools, high school, branch libraries and municipal buildings. Community Development and the Traffic, Parking and Transportation Departments will leaflet houses abutting a proposed change, or area under discussion.
- Hotlines: The Department of Public Works provides hotlines for graffiti, park repairs, potholes, and snow removal from sidewalks. Info-lines are also set up for Construction Locations, Recycling Information and Household Hazardous Waste Collection Days.
- Press Releases: This method is used by most departments for a variety of purposes, including to promote events, recruit volunteers,

disseminate specific information. The Police Department generates a chronological log of crime incidents each shift; this log is available to the public and is used by the Cambridge Chronicle to report its weekly crime log.

- Formal Mechanisms: The City employs a number of formal mechanisms as well to disseminate information to the public. These include advertisements and legal notices, submission of information to City Council for a City Council meeting, work with City Council Subcommittees, public hearings at subcommittees and at hearings of Boards and Commissions.
- The Internet and Public Access Terminals: Cambridge has an award-winning Homepage on the Internet (www.ci.cambridge.ma.us). Public access to computer resources to access the Internet is available at several locations (city-wide senior center @ 806 Massachusetts Avenue, the main and branch libraries, and at City Hall) and plans are underway to expand this access through the City's Youth Centers and at the Community Learning Center. Many departments maintain their own information on the Homepage, and use it quite regularly to disseminate information. The page receives approximately 6,000 "hits" per day, which translates into visits from approximately 2,000 unique "hosts" per week.
- Municipal Cable - Channel 1: Channel 1 is the in-house television production facility for all city departments. Many departments make use of this service for the production of training tapes, informational videos, public service announcements, presentation graphics, and for coverage of events and programs.

This report serves as an overview of the City's efforts. I look forward to a productive discussion on this topic.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Robert W. Healy', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

Attachment: Porter Square Process



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

SUSAN B. SCHLESINGER
*Assistant City Manager for
Community Development*

BETH RUBENSTEIN
*Deputy Director for
Community Development*

MEMORANDUM

TO: Robert W. Healy, City Manager

FROM: Susan B. Schlesinger, Assistant City Manager for Community Development ^{SBS}

DATE: May 27, 1998

RE: Description of Community Participation: Porter Square Roadways

The opportunity to redesign Porter Square Roadways grew out of the court-ordered Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) sewer separation project, which will begin construction in July 1998. The City decided to take advantage of the extensive construction project to address some long-standing deficiencies in Porter Square by combining the MWRA work with \$5 million in state Transportation Improvement Program funds for upgrades to Porter Square and North Mass Avenue. The Community Development Department was responsible for coordinating the redesign of Porter Square in collaboration with the Departments of Public Works and Traffic, Parking, and Transportation. The Porter Square Neighbors Association has played an active role in providing a forum for neighborhood input, through its newsletter, regular meetings and workshops. In addition, the City Manager appointed a 16-member Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to represent the diverse users of Porter Square in the redesign process. Working together closely over the last year, the City, the CAC and the neighborhood were able to reach consensus on redesign of this complicated intersection on time, while meeting all the major goals established at the project's start.

The Process

Early discussion of Porter Square began with community workshops which were sponsored by the Porter Square Neighborhood Association. The first of these, entitled "Envision Porter Square," was held in December 1995 and resulted in a printed report. The Association's Saturday morning forum on April 5, 1997, "The Future of Porter Square: Traffic and other Roadway Issues" was attended by 100 residents, business owners, and officials.

In April 1997, City Manager Robert Healy appointed the CAC seeking interested participants from the Porter Square, North Cambridge, Neighborhood 9, and Agassiz neighborhoods. Public announcements seeking potential committee members were made at the April 5 forum and in local newspapers. The CAC

held its first meeting on May 14, 1997, and met monthly over the course of the year.

Project Goals

Working from comments made at both Porter Square meetings, the following goals were outlined by the CAC for the project:

- reduce vehicular domination of Porter Square
- improve conditions for pedestrians
- improve conditions for bicyclists
- improve conditions for transit users
- reduce cut-through and shopping center-related vehicular traffic on neighboring residential streets
- improve the streetscape and create a sense of place in Porter Square
- improve traffic safety
- maintain traffic level-of-service at or near a existing conditions or Level-of-service D, whichever is lower

Given the geographic location of Porter Square and its role as a major transportation node and commercial center, successful redesign also involved close cooperation with the Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD), the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), the City of Somerville, and the Porter Square Shopping Center.

Special Challenges

The variety of constituencies, tight project deadlines and complex traffic movements led to some specific challenges:

- need to coordinate with and meet deadlines for the sewer work and North Massachusetts Ave. project
- involvement of several different neighborhoods, including Porter Square, Creighton/Porter/Regent (CPR), Upland Road/Neighborhood 9, Agassiz, White Street, and Somerville
- input from a major commercial interest (Porter Square Shopping Center)
- complicated transportation issues: intersection of major streets, the convergence of transportation lines (Red Line, Commuter Rail, major node for buses), and a complex signal operation
- involvement of several public entities: City of Cambridge, City of Somerville, MBTA, MHD
- constraints of roadway and subway infrastructure
- technical complexity of options under review

Elements of Plan:

- traffic signals and timing for cars, pedestrians and bicycles
- pavement markings and curb alignment
- road configurations, including turns
- bike lanes and crosswalk locations
- urban design elements (trees, benches, lighting, planting)

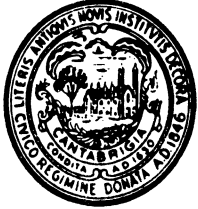
Elements adopted into the plan include:

- 5 additional crosswalks
- longer walk times at all signalized crosswalks, to give pedestrians more direct access and more options for crossing
- bike lanes on Mass. Ave., Somerville Ave. and a signal phase for the difficult move from southbound Mass. Ave. to Somerville Ave.
- left turn for vehicles out of the shopping center to southbound Mass. Ave.
- an exclusive right-turn lane from northbound Mass. Ave. to Somerville Ave.
- an enlarged plaza to create a much-enhanced Porter Square and give it a new sense of place

The CAC Process

The CAC, which was chaired by CDD and Traffic, Parking & Transportation, considered various design options, and worked hard to achieve multiple goals which did not easily converge on one design. The group also benefited from some training, early on, on how intersections function, how signal timing can be altered to meet goals, and other technical issues. Committee suggestions were explored thoroughly, with results always being reported back to the group. The City's traffic consultant provided drawings of many options for consideration. In meetings, time was allocated for all CAC members to speak on each issue. In addition, time was allocated for visitor comments at each meeting.

Finally, CAC members and/or City staff periodically briefed the neighborhood associations (Porter, Agassiz, Neighborhood 9), the bicycle and pedestrian committees, and reported their comments back to the CAC. New ideas were considered throughout the process, and in the end the group's willingness to work hard and accept compromise led to unanimous support for a preferred scheme. The selected scheme has also been well received by the larger neighborhood at a recent PSNA meeting on May 21. The group met its deadline, and the project is moving forward into final design. Work on the sewer project begins on Porter Square in July at Orchard St./Davenport St., with surface improvements to begin approximately one year later.



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EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI
Deputy City Manager

June 1, 1998

To the Honorable, the City Council:

Below please find a report on the City's activities pertaining to the City Council priority "Broaden Citizen Participation." I request that this information be referred to tonight's 7:00 p.m. hearing.

There are numerous forums in the City, both formal and informal, that encourage citizen involvement and participation in our government. Opportunities range from membership on a board, commission or citizen advisory committee, to attending a public meeting or writing a comment in a "comment book" on the Internet. Below is an overview, and examples, of the primary methods employed to involve the community in government.

Also, attached is an example of a successful community process the City organized and led during the planning of a major infrastructure project: Porter Square roadways.

In addition, as the Council is aware, the City is developing a program to most effectively "get the story out." In FY99, it is my intention to hire a Public Information Officer and develop a comprehensive, integrated program. Below, current methods the City uses to disseminate information are outlined. These activities clearly support the City's efforts to broaden citizen participation.

Forums that Encourage Citizen Participation:

- Standing Committees: Boards and commissions appointed by the City Manager, or other long-standing committees or task forces established to provide advice and guidance on a particular issue or project.

Consent Agenda #15

3935

A report on the City's activities
pertaining to the City Council
priority "Broaden Citizen Participation."

In City Council June 1, 1998

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