

4. From your perspective, what should the City government do better? Please check the three that you think need the most improvement from the functions listed below and specifically note the improvement needed.

(Please note that many of these functions are not totally within the control of the Cambridge City government, but that the City plays a strong role in all of them.)

- ☐ traffic and parking management _____
- ☐ snow plowing, road repair _____
- ☐ civil functions (licenses, etc) _____
- ☐ business climate support _____
- ☐ library services _____
- ☐ public safety (includes fire and police) _____
- ☐ youth education and services _____
- ☐ adult education and training _____
- ☐ elderly services _____
- ☐ fiscal management (reasonable taxes and fees) _____
- ☐ public issue exploration and deliberation _____
- ☐ public celebration _____
- ☐ housing _____
- ☐ zoning issues _____
- ☐ parks and recreation _____
- ☐ public art _____
- ☐ green space/open space _____
- ☐ other _____

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5. From your perspective, what does the City government do particularly well? Please check the three that you think the city does best and specifically note what aspect is the strongest.

(Again, please note that many of these functions are not totally within the control of the Cambridge City government, but that the City plays a strong role in all of them.)

- ☐ traffic and parking management _____
- ☐ snow plowing, road repair _____
- ☐ civil functions (licenses, etc) _____
- ☐ business climate support _____
- ☐ library services _____
- ☐ public safety (includes fire and police) _____
- ☐ youth education and services _____
- ☐ adult education and training _____
- ☐ elderly services _____
- ☐ fiscal management (reasonable taxes and fees) _____
- ☐ public issue exploration and deliberation _____
- ☐ public celebration _____
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- ☐ public art _____
- ☐ green space/open space _____
- ☐ other _____

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The City of Cambridge is starting its yearly planning for the next fiscal year – July 1, 1999 to July 1, 2000. In September the planning cycle will start with community members identify priorities, trends, opportunities and areas for improvement. Informed by community input, the City Council will then set its priorities and objectives in October to provide guidance for the City Manager as he begins in November to develop goals and departmental budgets.

The City Council is trying a variety of new approaches to get thoughtful and candid community feedback. Thus, your response (via internet, this meeting, this survey) is important to us. Though these questions are broad and quite general, please try to be as specific as possible in your responses. Thank you.

1. What 3 issues do you think the city government of Cambridge should focus on in the next year (July 1, 1999-July 1, 2000) to ensure that Cambridge maintains and supports its vitality?

2. What trends or threats should the city take note of in its planning?

3. Are there any opportunities that the city should be thinking about that are particularly timely now?

City of Cambridge

The Government Operations Committee held a public meeting on September 8, 1998, beginning at 1:15 p.m. in the Ackermann Room for the purpose of continuing discussion on the goal setting training, particularly with respect to the citizen input portion.

Present at the hearing were Councillor Sheila T. Russell, Chair of the Committee, Councillor Timothy J. Toomey, Jr., City Clerk D. Margaret Drury, Assistant to the City Council Sandra Albano, City Auditor James Lindstrom and trainer/facilitator Roberta Miller.

Councillor Russell convened the hearing and explained the purpose. She invited Roberta Miller to report on her interviews with City Councillors as to their preferences for obtaining community input for the goal setting. Ms. Miller reported support for using the Monday meeting for publicizing citizen input, community meetings at neighborhood locations, use of the internet, and an opportunity for telephone call-in (but she noted that the problem of crank calls was raised).

Ms. Miller stated that she also discussed using the polling places at the primary elections for a survey of people who come to vote. All of the City Councillors said that they liked the idea; however, after discussions with the City Manager's Office, her conclusion is that there are too many obstacles to overcome to utilize this method in September; for example, there are legal questions and there is the necessity of obtaining permission from the Secretary of the Commonwealth.

Councillor Russell stated that if it cannot be done at the September Primary, it cannot be done for the FY 2000 goal setting. Ms. Miller agreed. She stated that for future years, she thinks it is an excellent option. It is a very inexpensive method for a survey, which is usually prohibitively expensive.

Ms. Miller said that after talking individually with all of the members of the City Council whom she was able to reach, her suggestions for this year are to use the Monday night meetings as a forum to inform the public about an expanded process; to have neighborhood meetings; to use internet; and perhaps to have a call-in session.

Councillor Toomey said that property reevaluations have come out and will have a big effect in what people are concerned about. Councillor Russell agreed.

Ms. Miller stated that she suggests a two week period to take public input. The City Hall sign should be used to advertise the process.

Ms. Miller stated that she recommends four targeted community meetings, one in East Cambridge, one in North Cambridge, one in West Cambridge and one in Central Square. They should be facilitated working sessions. They should be kept to the topics and give everyone an equal opportunity to participate.

Ms. Albano asked who would facilitate these meetings. Ms. Miller stated that she would moderate these meetings, and members of the City Council do not need to attend them if they have schedule conflicts. She will organize the results into a report for the first goal setting training session.

The Committee agreed to hold meetings at the following locations:

North Cambridge - Fitzgerald School	September 23, 1998
Central Square - Senior Center	September 24, 1998
East Cambridge - Harrington School	October 1, 1998
West Cambridge - Tobin School	October 8, 1998

Because the Department of Public Works must make signs to publicize these meetings in order to give reasonable notice to the public it was agreed that these dates will not be changed.

Ms. Miller stated that she also recommends use of the internet. She said that it is important to keep internet responses separate because it may be difficult to know how many times someone responds.

Councillor Russell said that many people do not have computers, so the Committee should also put the survey in the newspaper for people to clip, fill out and return to libraries, the City Council Office and the City Clerk's Office.

Ms. Miller then distributed a draft of the questions to be asked. (Attached)

Councillor Russell suggested having a "Cambridge Inside Out" show to discuss the expanded process for citizen participation.

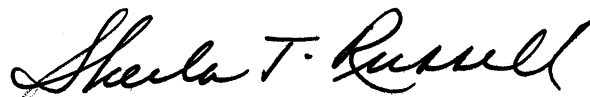
Ms. Miller then asked about the idea of telephone call-ins. It was agreed that the Committee recommends having staff available to answer the telephone for a call-in session during the September 28, 1998 City Council meeting from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Ms. Miller emphasized that the two goals of establishing this process are as follows:

1. Generate ideas for the planning process.
2. Allow citizens to connect themselves to government in a meaningful way during a planning process designed to get proactive rather than reactive responses from the public.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:27 p.m.

For the Committee,



Councillor Sheila Russell,
Chair

Committee Report #4

Communication was received from
D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk,
transmitting a report from Councillor
Russell, Chair of the Government Operations
Committee, for a meeting held on
September 8, 1998 for the purpose of
continuing discussion on the goal
setting training, particularly with
respect to the citizen input portion.

In City Council September 14, 1998

Report accepted.
Recommendations approved.
Placed on file.