



# NEIGHBORHOOD & LONG TERM PLANNING, PUBLIC FACILITIES, ARTS & CELEBRATION COMMITTEE

## COMMITTEE MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Tuesday, November 14, 2023

12:30 PM

Sullivan Chamber  
795 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02139

The Neighborhood and Long Term Planning, Public Facilities, Arts and Celebrations Committee will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, November 14, 2023 from 12:30p.m. - 2:30p.m. to have presentations and discussion on the City's proposed Linear Park redesign, which includes widening of the existing pathway, its potential impact on the viability of existing trees, and additional planting, with input from residents/neighborhood landscape architects on their concerns and recommendations.

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Dennis J. Carlone	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Patricia Nolan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Quinton Zondervan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	12:34 PM
Marc C. McGovern	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Alanna Mallon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

A public meeting of the Cambridge City Council's Neighborhood & Long-Term Planning, Public Facilities, Arts & Celebration Committee was held on Tuesday, November 14, 2023. The meeting was Called to Order at 12:30 p.m. by the Chair, Councillor Carlone. Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2022 adopted by Massachusetts General Assembly and approved by the Governor, this public meeting was hybrid, allowing participation in person, in the Sullivan Chamber, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA and by remote participation via Zoom.

### At the request of the Chair, Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor McGovern – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Vice Mayor Mallon – Absent

Councillor Nolan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Zondervan – Absent\*

Councillor Carlone – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

**Present – 3, Absent 2. Quorum established.**

\*Councillor Zondervan was marked present in the Sullivan Chamber at 12:34p.m.

The Chair, Councillor Carlone offered opening remarks and noted that the call of the meeting was to have presentations and discussion on the City's proposed Linear Park redesign, which includes widening of the existing pathway, its potential impact of the viability of existing trees, and additional planting, with input from residents/neighborhood landscape architects on their concerns and recommendations. Present at the meeting was Deputy City Manager Owen O'Riordan, Assistant City Manager for the Community Development Department (CDD), Iram

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Farooq, and Commissioner of Public Works, Kathy Watkins. Also in attendance from CDD were Charles Creagh, Transportation Project Planner, and Gary Chan, Neighborhood Planner, as well as Kevin Beuttell, Supervising Landscape Architect, from the Department of Public Works (DPW).

The Chair, Councillor Carlone recognized Ruth Loetterle and Gretchen Friesinger who offered a presentation titled “Linear Park Presentation to the Neighborhood and Long Term Planning, Public Facilities, Arts and Celebrations Committee” which was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet. Ruth Loetterle and Gretchen noted that although they were members of the Public Planting Committee, they were not attending the meeting on behalf of the Committee but were there representing themselves as residents of Cambridge. The presentation offered an overview and examples of how the City can address safety and comfort for all users of Linear Park, the protection and preservation of trees, minimizing impervious surfaces, and how to address deferred maintenance of the park.

The Chair, Councillor Carlone recognized Maggie Booz who was joining the meeting remotely via Zoom and spoke on behalf of the Public Planting Committee. Maggie Booz shared that the Committee was in favor of the Council order for preservation of the park and not widening the path but will wait to see the City’s proposed plans to comment further. Maggie Booz provided additional comments, as a citizen – not a member of the Committee, regarding trees and the Urban Forest Master Plan.

The Chair, Councillor Carlone recognized Deputy City Manager O’Riordan who offered opening remarks and shared what the City goals look like regarding Linear Park. Charles Creagh, Gary Chan, and Kevin Beuttell gave a presentation titled “Linear Park Redesign Project, Neighborhood and Long Term Planning, Public Facilities, Arts and Celebrations Committee, Park Design Updates” which was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet. The presentation offered an overview of the project background, public engagement, project vision, park design character, key park upgrades, tree protection and plantings, and what the next steps are moving forward.

**The Chair, Councillor Carlone opened Public Comment. Each speaker was given the opportunity to speak for two minutes.**

Amy Flax, 86 Normandy Avenue, Cambridge, MA, noted the importance for everyone to be able to use the path and the preservation of trees.

Chris Cassa, 103 Gore Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments in support of upgrades to Linear Park.

Dylan Callahan, 13 Underwood Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments and suggestions relative to POR 2023 #187 and noted that there are no other paths that connect to other paths of surrounding cities and towns.

N Trivedi, 41 Magoun Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments that were in support of the City’s plan regarding Linear Park.

Gleb Bahmutov, 19 Winslow Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments in favor of Linear Park and suggested upgrades.

Eppa Rixey, 126 Harvey Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments and suggestions relative to upgrades to Linear Park.

Tim Russell, 69 Harvey Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in favor of having more people using the path and supports the City with their plan to update the path and help the trees.

James Williamson, Churchill Avenue, Cambridge, MA, shared concerns about pedestrian safety walking through Linear Park.

Nicolas Fernandez, 1 Whittemore Avenue, Cambridge, MA, offered comments about providing a safe means of transportation that also helps the environment.

Joel Nogic, 94 Clifton Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments in support of improvements to Linear Park.

David Bass, 23 Norris Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments of concerns about shared traffic between pedestrians and cyclists on the path and encouraged a paved pedestrian path in Linear Park.

Heather Hoffman, 213 Hurley Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments of concerns and frustrations regarding plans to Linear Park.

**The Chair, Councillor Carlone made a motion to close public comment.  
On a voice vote of four members present, the motion passed unanimously.**

The Chair, Councillor Carlone recognized Councillor Zondervan who noted the importance of only fixing what is broken regarding Linear Park and the redesign suggestions. Councillor Zondervan shared his support for more signage and education for people using the path and operating motorized vehicles. Councillor Zondervan highlighted that it is extremely important to keep all the trees on the path as well as adding additional trees and forestry.

The Chair, Councillor Carlone recognized Councillor Nolan who noted the importance of promoting the Urban Forestry Master Plan and offered comments in support of tree canopy on the path and how to ensure the trees are safe. Councillor Nolan had clarifying questions relative to proposed improvements to trees and the width of pathway. City Staff were available to share additional information regarding discussions between the City, consultants, and the Public Planting Committee. Iram Farooq shared that she and her staff recognize the frustrations from the public and Councillors but are sharing as much information and detail from consultants as possible at this time.

The Chair, Councillor Carlone recognized Councillor McGovern who offered comments that were in support of safety for all users of the pathway and noted that it is always a hard balance to

find agreement between groups of people who are coming together with proposed ideas on what they believe is best. Councillor McGovern asked what the plan would be for the maintenance of trees and keeping them alive along the path. Kathy Watkins noted that looking at the conditions where trees are planted is important and the goal is to provide a space where the trees will thrive. Councillor McGovern shared he was in favor of the City's plan regarding the path and noted that anything to minimize any negative impacts to encourage more usage he is happy to support.

**The Chair, Councillor Carlone made a motion to extend the meeting by fifteen minutes. On a voice vote of four members present, the motion passed unanimously.**

The Chair, Councillor Carlone had clarifying questions regarding the City's presentation and proposed updates to the Linear Park. The team from the City was available to respond and review their presentation with more detail, noting that they plan on getting into 100% design in early 2024. Councillor Carlone offered suggestions on signage and marked pathways to create a safer space for all users. Councillor Carlone asked for additional information regarding air spading, Ruth Loetterle went through the process of air spading and Kevin Beuttell shared some of the findings of the City arborist, both noting the challenges that will be faced during the process of redesign. Councillor Carlone provided additional comments that were in support of trees.

**The Chair, Councillor Carlone made a motion to adjourn the meeting. On a voice vote of four members present, the motion passed unanimously.**

**The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:48p.m.**

#### **Attachments:**

Attachment A – The City Clerk's Office received eighteen written communications from the public.

**Clerk's Note:** The City of Cambridge/22 City View records every City Council meeting and every City Council Committee meeting. This is a permanent record. The video for this meeting can be viewed at:

[https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/614?view\\_id=1&redirect=true&h=d3a71971555266f7b192e6bcf63c4eb7](https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/614?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=d3a71971555266f7b192e6bcf63c4eb7)

That the City Manager is requested to work with DPW to restore Linear Park by re-using the existing award-winning design, to create, publish and implement a climate resilience-based maintenance plan and minimize the embodied carbon of the project by re-using, wherever possible, the existing lamps and lamp posts.

A communication was received from Bill Deignan, Transportation Planner, Community Development Department, transmitting a presentation titled Linear Park Redesign Project, Neighborhood and Long Term Planning, Public Facilities, Arts and Celebrations Committee, Park Design Updates.

A communication was received from Ruth Loetterle from the Public Planting Committee, regarding Linear Park Presentation.

Erwin, Nicole

Attachment A

**From:** Katherine Beaty <katherinebeaty@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 14, 2023 12:29 PM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk; City Manager  
**Subject:** Please support improvements to Linear Park

November 14, 2023

Dear Cambridge City Council:

I write in support of the City's plans to redesign Linear Park. I travel on this section of the path 4-6 times daily as I take children to school by bicycle, run errands in Davis Square by bicycle, and walk the dog. Widening the path where possible is critical to ensure varying modes of travel can safely co-exist, especially for small children and other vulnerable residents.

I support the need for green space, and truly value the current tree canopy, and am pleased the City will plant even more trees over the course of the project. In the hottest summer months, Linear Path is a refuge where the neighborhood can walk the dogs without overheating. Though, given the urgent climate crisis, we must find ways to encourage a shift away from single occupancy vehicles to multi-modal transportation.

Linear Park is a connection for people traveling into the city to/from Belmont via the Fitchburg Cutoff path, to/from Arlington/Lexington via the Minuteman path, as well as a connection to the new Community Path extension in Somerville, and also part of the Mass Central Rail Trail. Linear Park is also a safe way for people in the neighborhood just to get home safely by bicycle, because of fast moving high volume cut-through traffic along Harvey St.

Sincerely,  
 Katherine Beaty  
 155 Harvey St.

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**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** David Bass <david.ncfo@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 14, 2023 11:51 AM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Linear Park Redesign Public Comment

I have appended the text of my comment for the November 14, 2023 Neighborhood & Long Term Planning Committee meeting.

David Bass  
 23 Norris Street

I live just a few blocks south of Linear Park, and I use the park almost every day, usually as a pedestrian or jogger, sometimes as a cyclist. My experiences as a pedestrian have been lovely when the park is not crowded, when, for the most part, people on wheels and people on feet coexist courteously. But at peak commuting hours, the path becomes primarily a thoroughfare for cyclists and motorized vehicles, and not just e-bikes and electric scooters, but also small motorcycles. At such times, I walk alongside the path, and when I do, tree roots and footings pose a significant tripping hazard. I have fallen and been injured.

At rush hour, any single path will always be dominated by wheels and will never be shared comfortably by foot traffic. What is needed for such times is a separate, paved pedestrian infrastructure. I applaud CDD for recognizing this and including meandering paths and stone dust shoulders in their design. From my perspective, both as a pedestrian and as a cyclist, the more such separated paved paths and the wider such shoulders, the better.

Trees are vital. Shared use is a lovely concept. But safety is paramount.

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**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Amy Meltzer <ameltzerma@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 14, 2023 11:00 AM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk; City Manager  
**Subject:** comments on Linear Park

M. Clerk I am submitting these comments for the meeting being held today to discuss the plans for Linear Park. I am sorry I am unable to attend.

Based on an analysis of the proposal to widen the path at Linear Park, I see the following problems:

- It will put at risk many mature trees in the park
- It takes at least 25 years before a newly planted sapling sequesters the same amount of carbon as a mature tree
- It violates the basic tenets of the Urban Forest Master Plan--to reduce the number of trees removed unnecessarily, to reduce the amount of pavement in the City, to promote "cool corridors" and to have ALL City Departments promote its implementation
- The City's own bicycle network plan calls for the parallel streets of Harvey and Dudley to be Bicycle Priority Streets and yet the development of this portion of the bicycle network and associated wayfinding for bicyclists has not been entered into the planning for this project
- The adjoining Somerville path width was maintained at 10' when it was repaved just four years ago
- It will substantially increase the amount of impervious surfaces in the park
- Best practices have not been followed in the development of the design of the park
- The project has been misrepresented to the public and poses a false narrative--pitting bicycles against trees, when bicyclists are a chief beneficiary of shaded bike routes and especially this "cool corridor".

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments.

Amy Meltzer  
 45 Antrim St  
 Cambridge MA 02139

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**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Sunny <SunnyAnnaB@proton.me>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 14, 2023 10:56 AM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk  
**Subject:** Please move forward with the Linear Park Plans - today's Hearing

To the City Council and the City Clerk:

Please accept this quick note **supporting the Linear Park project and specifically the widened path.**

I would write more but I understand that there is a meeting today, which I only just learned of, so I will keep this brief in order for it to reach you in time.

My family consists of older adults who ride bikes (60s/70s) as well as younger people and all of us walk as well on Linear Park. This is the project that should have been done in the first place and now that we are aware of how popular it is, it behooves us to make these improvements. It makes no sense to continue to live in the past. I have heard that there are people saying "no change," except that they do want change, since they want more trees. Luckily, we can have more trees AND a much safer path.

Thank you for supporting a path that works for everyone by expanding the space.

Sincerely,

Anna (& Co.)

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## Erwin, Nicole

**From:** Ellen Vickery <emv221@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 13, 2023 10:07 PM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk; City Manager  
**Subject:** Alewife Linear Park redesign discussion at Planning Committee

Dear City Council members,

I understand that a PO regarding Alewife Linear Park is up for discussion at tomorrow's Neighborhood & Long Term Planning committee meeting. While I understand the careful approach councilors wish to take towards any major project, I want to caution against the PO as written. Much of the opposition and push towards "restoration" comes from inaccurate and misleading claims from the Friends of the Linear Park. I also find some of the PO downright confusing. To even suggest that the pavement be replaced with a non-paved option, as is described in the PO, in such a well-utilized path just sounds ill thought out. This *reduces* accessibility for *many* - bikes, strollers, wheelchairs, toddlers on scooters, people with uncertain footing.

Linked here is an in-depth review of the claims against the redesign that corrects and places them in better context. <https://plaffd.github.io/net/linearpark.html>

Summarized:

Claim	Fact
The redesign will "kill or maim" over 100 trees.	The redesign takes care to preserve most of the existing tree canopy, and will greatly expand it with new plantings. Specifically, the plan has only 6 tree removals (5 already in poor condition), and will also plant over 120 new trees. As for "maimed," only ~15 "high risk" (by FOLP's own metrics) trees will actually see increased asphalt encroachment in their root zones.
The redesign will double the amount of pavement.	The actual increase in pavement area (asphalt with small sections of brick/concrete) is 13%. "Double" comes from misleadingly classifying stone dust surfaces (shoulders and side paths) as pavement.
The existing 10.5' path width is already compliant with AASHTO shared-use path standards.	While that width is technically over the <i>minimum</i> of 10', AASHTO-recommended FHWA grading (which takes path usage into account) gives it a "D" at best, trending towards an "F" with expected future increases in the number of people using the path.
The path widening is only to benefit bicycles, to let them go faster and save them 30 seconds.	The widening will improve safety and comfort for all users, by providing more room for passing interactions between various users moving at different speeds along the path.
The current path matches the width of the nearby Somerville and Belmont community paths, so widening is unnecessary.	The original section of the Somerville Community Path is typically 12'-14' wide, and the new 10' wide budget-cut version of the extension is already too narrow/congested. Linear Park also sees much higher usage than the SCP. The latest design for the planned Belmont community path is 12' wide.

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**Claim**

There are alternative routes available for cyclists and they should be diverted there instead of using the path.

**Fact**

The existing/planned "sharrows" on Dudley and Harvey streets are a poor substitute for an off-street route like the Linear Park path. Additionally, cyclists cannot connect to Mass Ave via Dudley St as the last block is the wrong direction.

Linear Park is a beautiful park so I understand the desire to "restore" instead of "redesign"; however, use and volume have changed over time and we must not get stuck in the past in the name of "preservation" when the previous design can be respected while improving use with an eye to the future. Of all the concerns against the re-design, having walked the path with my daughter, a wider path would improve safety and accessibility for all at minimal impact to the tree canopy (something I also care *deeply* about). Saying that the current width is acceptable because it is on par with other communities is both misleading and short-sighted. Cambridge has led the pack in so many things and this is against the innovative, forward-thinking character of the city.

I support the Linear Park Redesign and look forward to the improvements for all that it will yield.

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Ellen Vickery  
70 Jackson Street

**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Emily Ann Lalka <emily.lalka@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 13, 2023 8:04 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk  
**Subject:** In Support of Linear Park Improvements & Widening Path

Hello,

I am writing in favor of improvements to Linear Park and extending the path width to 14 feet. I use this route for walking and cycling and know the difference it makes to have a wider path -- especially for a cargo bike carrying kids. These improvements will help ensure cyclists and pedestrians have ample space to travel in each direction. I live with the daily pain points where path widths were reduced from original plans along the Somerville community path extension where we now bottleneck and won't have enough width in our new path to meet the ever growing use and needs of our high density community of pedestrians, cyclists, and commuters. By improving Linear Park and expanding the width of this path you are making improvements that will better connect the Minuteman and the Community Path Extension and grow with the transit needs of our cities.

Thank you,  
Emily Lalka  
99 Thurston St  
Somerville, MA 02145

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**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Andrew Glaude <ajgajg1134@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 13, 2023 5:48 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk  
**Cc:** City Manager  
**Subject:** Alewife Linear Park Redesign Comment

Hello,

As a frequent user of the Alewife Linear Park as a pedestrian, cyclist, and jogger. I would like to voice my strong support for the city redesign. I frequently use the park to safely travel to visit friends and businesses in the vicinity of the park, access the MBTA station, or connect through to Belmont.

The wider path would make me feel safer and allow for more room when being passed or passing by other users of the park. This is especially important given the high volume of users of the park. Additionally, the pavement is currently in poor condition making use of the path especially on a bicycle uncomfortable and possibly even dangerous.

Thank You,  
Andrew Glaude  
47 Fairmount Ave, Somerville, MA 02144

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**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** David Galambos <dagalambos@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 13, 2023 5:27 PM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Subject:** Comment for neighborhood/planning cmte, nov 14

Dear Councillors,

I recently read the policy order from Oct 16th (POR #187) relating to the linear park redesign. Ahead of your meeting tomorrow, I wanted to share some thoughts as a Cambridge resident and pedestrian/cyclist user of the park path:

1. **I strongly feel that the path should remain paved.** As far as I can tell, in addition to pedestrians, many path users are on bikes, pushing strollers, or using mobility aids like wheelchairs. Any time it rained or during a snowy winter, a non-paved path could become unpleasant or even inaccessible to these users. I imagine it would be very difficult to bike or use a wheelchair/scooter on a wet, muddy path, and indeed many cyclists avoid the Reformatory Branch Trail near Bedford/Concord for exactly this reason.
2. **The path provides a vital connection between the Minuteman/Fitchburg paths and Mass Ave + the Somerville community path,** making its accessibility especially important. If it became more difficult to access the linear park path by bike or otherwise, the possible alternatives of Rindge Ave or going further north on Mass Ave are not comparable in terms of biking comfort/safety or route directness.
3. The paved path should be at least as wide as is now, preferably with gravel shoulders and not mulch/wood chips. A more narrow path would not provide enough space for safe passing, and a gravel shoulder is safer than wood chips if a bike/scooter goes off the path for some reason. Gravel can also provide an unpaved surface for walkers/runner who prefer that.

Thank you for the work that all of you are doing on this redesign; the linear park is an amazing resource and I am excited for it to be improved.

Best,  
 David Galambos

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**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Deignan, Bill  
**Sent:** Monday, November 13, 2023 5:16 PM  
**To:** LeBlanc, Diane; Erwin, Nicole  
**Cc:** City Clerk; Rasmussen, Susanne; Farooq, Iram; Creagh, Charles  
**Subject:** Presentation for tomorrow's council hearing on Linear Park Redesign  
**Attachments:** Linear Park\_Council Ctee Meeting\_Nov\_2023.pdf

Hi-

Attached please find the city staff presentation for tomorrow's hearing on Linear Park Redesign by the Council's Neighborhood and Long Term Planning, Public Facilities, Arts and Celebrations Committee. We assume that the Clerk's office will have the presentation ready to show at the hearing but please let us know if staff need to bring a computer with the presentation or anything else. Thanks.

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**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** IsaGold <IsaGold@protonmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 13, 2023 4:51 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk  
**Subject:** Letter for November 14 Neighborhood and Long Term Planning City Council Meeting

Dear City Clerk and Members of the City Council,

Please see my statement below regarding the plans for Linear Park as you consider your discussion tomorrow.

Thank you,  
 Isa G.

Cambridge City Council

Dear Members of the Council:

I am writing to support in the most urgent terms the plans to improve Linear Park, specifically making sure that it is widened it for safety and so that everyone can use it. This is one of busiest paths in the country (we should know, our family uses it all the time) and it is uncomfortable and unsafe because it is much too narrow for the number of people on it. Everyone I know who walks, bikes, strolls, etc. in the area is always complaining that all the paths are too narrow. Everyone knows that making more space makes it better so that people can walk, children can bike, people can use strollers, etc. It is completely nonsensical to argue that it will be better by squeezing everyone into a small space. The path will only be more busy because it now connects to Boston and Belmont. These paths are essential to the quality of life, and allowing EVERYONE to use them requires more space.

Please vote to allow the project to be built, for the benefit of everyone, and change the order to say that the path should be built as proposed.

Thank you,  
 Isa G.  
 Cambridge Family

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**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Deignan, Bill  
**Sent:** Monday, November 13, 2023 4:41 PM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Cc:** Farooq, Iram; Rasmussen, Susanne; Creagh, Charles; Watkins, Kathy  
**Subject:** FW: doc for clerk  
**Attachments:** Linear Park\_Council Ctee Meeting\_Nov\_2023.pdf

Hi-

Attached please find the city staff presentation for tomorrow's hearing on Linear Park Redesign by the Council's Neighborhood and Long Term Planning, Public Facilities, Arts and Celebrations Committee. We assume that the Clerk's office will have the presentation ready to show at the hearing but please let us know if staff need to bring a computer with the presentation or anything else. Thanks.

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**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Jill <JillSBC@protonmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 13, 2023 3:33 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk  
**Subject:** Please expand Linear Park path - comment for Council Committee Meeting of November 14, 2023

To the City Council:

As a frequent user of all the paths in Cambridge, I implore you not to impede the progress made by the City in creating an excellent proposal for improving the system for everyone. There were meetings and site walks discussing the issues and opportunities and the proposal makes complete sense in terms of expanding the space for more comfort for all while also making nice improvements to the border areas with seating, etc.

As I use a lot of paths, especially for walking around the region, I know from experience that a little extra width goes a long way. There are so many more people who would like to enjoy these paths and they should be welcomed. With all the focus on health and the climate, the space needed for people to walk and bike is every growing, and it makes no sense to artificially constrain the space for absolutely no rational reason (as you know, the claims about trees being killed is not based on fact).

Thank you for supporting this project.

Very truly yours,

Jill S.  
Cambridge resident and homeowner

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**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Ceila Z <zalice@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 13, 2023 10:50 AM  
**To:** Ofer Inbar  
**Cc:** City Council; City Clerk; City Manager  
**Subject:** Re: Support Linear Park redesign

Good morning,

I urge the council to proceed with the Linear Park redesign. This is an important improvement to an important common space that is much beloved and in need of the redesign.

Regards,

Alice "Ceila" Zelman  
 358 Washington St.

On Mon, Nov 13, 2023 at 10:23 AM Ofer Inbar <cos@aaaaa.org> wrote:

I recently learned that the council is considering cancelling the planned redesign of Linear Park and am dismayed. Please move forward with the redesign as planned, including especially the widening of the path. Other elements of the plan that I saw on the plan web site are all good improvements, including adding more trees and upgrading amenities.

Opposition to the redesign seems to be based on a hostility to bicycles from the same vocal minority who have been trying to sabotage protected bike lanes and other improvements around the city, but here they're targeting a segment of the most important bike path in the northern metro Boston area.

They are a minority, as the recent council election shows.

Don't let them ruin this plan for everyone else.

-- Cos

**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Eli Inkelas <eli.inkelas@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 13, 2023 10:40 AM  
**To:** City Clerk; City Manager; City Council  
**Subject:** I Support the Alewife Linear Park Redesign

Dear Councilors and City Manager,

I'm writing in support of the city's current plans to redesign Alewife Linear Park, and to strongly encourage the City Council against depaving the path. The Alewife Linear Park is an essential piece of infrastructure that connects Mass Ave and the Somerville Community Path (and therefore much of Cambridge and Somerville) to the Minuteman Path and the Alewife Brook Parkway.

If the multi-use path were to be torn out or converted to a dirt path, this vital connection would be lost. I fully support the city's current plan to widen the path modestly, allowing for more a more comfortable experience for a variety of users while also planting 120 new trees.

Thank you for your time,

Eli Inkelas, 400 Cambridge Street

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**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Ofer Inbar <cos@aaaaa.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 13, 2023 10:23 AM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk; City Manager; Ceila Zelman  
**Subject:** Support Linear Park redesign

I recently learned that the council is considering cancelling the planned redesign of Linear Park and am dismayed. Please move forward with the redesign as planned, including especially the widening of the path. Other elements of the plan that I saw on the plan web site are all good improvements, including adding more trees and upgrading amenities.

Opposition to the redesign seems to be based on a hostility to bicycles from the same vocal minority who have been trying to sabotage protected bike lanes and other improvements around the city, but here they're targeting a segment of the most important bike path in the northern metro Boston area.

They are a minority, as the recent council election shows.

Don't let them ruin this plan for everyone else.

-- Cos

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**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Mark Boswell <markaboswell@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 13, 2023 8:35 AM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk  
**Cc:** Creagh, Charles; Deignan, Bill; Seiderman, Cara  
**Subject:** Cambridge Bicycle Committee: Support for Alewife Linear Park Improvements

Dear City Councilors,

The forwarded letter below is the statement of the Cambridge Bicycle Committee's recommendation for the planned improvements to the Alewife Linear Park previously sent to the Community Development Department.

The Committee believes that a wider path will more comfortably and safely accommodate the rapidly growing number of users on this popular multi-use path. The Alewife Linear Park path serves as a critical connection to the Alewife neighborhood through North Cambridge. A wider path will increase safety by reducing conflicts between users of different modes: walking, running, cycling, scooters, and other micro mobility devices that the public continues to adopt in growing numbers. These modes are part of the ongoing story of Cambridge's efforts to provide sustainable transportation alternatives, which have obvious health and climate benefits.

Please include these communications in the public record for the November 14, 2023 meeting of the Neighborhood and Long Term Planning Committee.

Respectfully,  
 Mark Boswell  
 On behalf of the Cambridge Bicycle Committee

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Mark Boswell <markaboswell@gmail.com>  
**Subject:** Support for Alewife Linear Park Improvements  
**Date:** July 25, 2023 at 10:34:56 EDT  
**To:** ccreagh@cambridgema.gov, wdeignan@cambridgema.gov  
**Cc:** "Seiderman, Cara" <cseiderman@cambridgema.gov>

The City of Cambridge Bicycle Committee would like to express its strong support for the proposed improvements to the Alewife Linear Park. Over the years, the popularity of the path has grown significantly. It has proven to be a popular, well-used transportation corridor for people walking, jogging, cycling, and using other micromobility travel options. With this robust growth in usage, the path will certainly benefit from improved pavement and the increased width, reducing conflicts that occur when there are many people using a narrow space. All of these active transportation modes are well aligned with the City's goals of sustainable transportation.

The most useful paths are those that serve the greatest number of users conveniently. Good access to the path is what makes it convenient. For example, there are already connections to the neighborhood north of the path on Cottage Park Avenue and Whittemore Avenue. However there is no similar connection to the neighborhood south of the path along Harvey Street and Dudley Street.

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The path is already accessible from points along Massachusetts Avenue. However there is poor access to the North Cambridge neighborhood between Harvey Street and Rindge Avenue.

We urge you to establish a good quality connection via Westley Avenue, where a problematic fence currently blocks access to the path. Without this connection, users needing to exit the path to reach their final destination in North Cambridge are forced to travel to Harvey Street and then continue along adjacent parallel streets, lengthening the trip unnecessarily. The community would be better served by having easy-to-use connections to points north and south of the path.

Mark Boswell,  
On behalf of the Cambridge Bicycle Committee

**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Ian Rudnick <ianrudnick@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 13, 2023 1:18 AM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk; City Manager  
**Subject:** Alewife Linear Park redesign

Hi folks at city council,

My name is Ian Rudnick, I live at 135 Inman St in Cambridge, and I'm concerned about misleading claims surrounding the Alewife Linear Park redesign.

The redesign originally proposed seems like a great plan to me. Remove 6 poor-condition trees, plant a hundred new ones, increase the width of the shared path to improve pedestrian safety given the traffic level, and cover desire paths in stone to help the soil. All of those seem like no-brainer improvements.

So it really confuses me why this policy order to "restore not redesign" is getting pushed through. I'm hearing all these absurd claims that the redesign will kill hundreds of trees and double the asphalt space in the park, and those aren't true. The Friends of Linear Park claim that the path is already wide enough to be compliant with the standard, but they don't take into account the usage level of the path.

The other argument that bugs me is that cyclists should not go through the park and that there are other routes. This is ridiculous; trails away from roads are vastly safer, and the alternate routes near the park don't even have bike lanes. Plus, Harvey St and Dudley St are both one-way, making navigation between Alewife station and Mass Ave more cumbersome.

And as icing on the cake--this path is in one of the most hostile parts of the city to cyclists. I often see cars speed through the four-lane sections upwards of forty miles per hour between Harvard, Porter, and Arlington on Mass Ave, next to unprotected bike lanes that have no efficient alternate path via side roads. This part of the city badly needs good, safe corridors to bike through, so it's no surprise that the Alewife Linear Park is a popular one.

I hope you reconsider the policy order, and see that the redesign plan is not so drastic as its opponents claim and will improve safety and comfort for the many people who use it to travel to and from the train station.

Regards,  
 Ian Rudnick

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**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Ari Ofsevit <ari.ofsevit@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 11, 2023 7:57 PM  
**To:** City Council; City Clerk  
**Subject:** Alewife Linear Park improvements

Dear City Council,

I would like to provide this comment regarding the Alewife Linear Park improvements.

These improvements are long overdue and must be extended along the entirety of Cambridge's portion of the linear path and the beginning of the Minuteman Bikeway. Cambridge should be ashamed that our portion of these paths is in the worst shape of any portion of these facilities. The original pavement—now more than 30 years old—on the minuteman is narrow, potholed, bumpy and treacherous, and the City should make sure that it is repaved so that it can be safely enjoyed and used by thousands of people every day. Similarly, the Cambridge portion of the Alewife linear path is crumbling. In both cases, the pavement improves at the city line leaving Cambridge. The facility should also be widened from 11 to 14 feet to conform with current standards; I have spent time on newer, wider, and far less-used paths in the area and the extra width is noticeable and welcomed.

Thank you

Ari

Ari Ofsevit  
5 Arcadia St #3

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**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** Jenine Turner-Trauring <jenineturner@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 10, 2023 6:56 PM  
**To:** City Clerk  
**Cc:** Creagh, Charles; Deignan, Bill; Seiderman, Cara; City Council  
**Subject:** Pedestrian committee statement on Linear Park  
**Attachments:** PedCtteeLetterLinearParkJuly2023\_FINAL.pdf

Dear City Council members,

The City is in the process of discussing the proposed Linear Park redesign plan. The Cambridge Pedestrian Committee strongly supports the city's plan. The path is well utilized by a wide range of travel modes and levels of ability. Widening it will provide more space for pedestrians and reduce conflicts with people on bikes. New lighting adds safety and comfort, and increases ease of use for visually impaired users. Seating makes for a more inviting space and allows for rest. The plan will also plant over 100 trees, which will add additional shade during the hotter part of the year. Water fountains, emergency call boxes, and play areas all contribute to the comfort, safety, and enjoyment of all users.

In short, we believe the city's proposed design would provide a number of benefits to pedestrians using the path, and to the community as a whole.

We request that this letter, and our previous communication (attached) be part of the record for the November 14th meeting of the Neighborhood and Long Term Planning committee.

Sincerely,

Jenine Turner-Trauring

On behalf of the Cambridge Pedestrian Committee

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To: Charles Creagh and Bill Deignan, Project Managers  
From: Sandy Goldberg, Chair, Cambridge Pedestrian Committee  
Re: Linear Park Redesign  
Date: July 19, 2023

The Cambridge Pedestrian Committee would like to convey its strong support for the improvements and redesign of Linear Park.

Of particular note, here are some specific comments:

- It is very important to widen the path to ensure that the path can accommodate the every-increasing number of people using it. More people will be using it now that the Community Path Extension to North Point is open. On a recent site walk, we observed high numbers of people using the path, in a wide variety of modes. We are convinced that this trend will continue. To avoid friction between a high number of users with different kinds of mobility, expanded facilities are needed.
- The connection to Westley should be included as part of the public access network. This would be an excellent connection for people walking in the neighborhood; some of our members live in North Cambridge and see the specific value to them.
- Good lighting is important as well.

Thank you for your work on these improvements.

**Erwin, Nicole**

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**From:** rosemous@rcn.com  
**Sent:** Friday, November 10, 2023 3:33 PM  
**To:** Heather Hoffman  
**Cc:** Suzanne Blier; PSNA; Cambridge Neighborhood Association Google Group; livable Cambridge open; City Clerk; rosemous  
**Subject:** Re: [ACN] Re: [Porter square] Public Sewage Pollution Meeting -- Register via ZOOM to attend at 6:00 on Nov. 15th, Wed.

Thanks Heather for replying:

To complicate matters further, I just realized that the group concerned about the sewerage issue at Alewife Brook AND those referring to the Cycling Safety Ordinance utilize the SAME acronym - CSO. Hence, I became confused when my Zoom confirmation referred to the CSO! Being obsessed with the drastic form of Quick-Build rushed through 2 years ago up here where I live on N. Mass. Ave. (Dudley-Alewife), I assumed the meeting was about bike lanes. However, the REAL problem was my too hasty response to the acronyms: one of which is for the Cycling Safety Ordinance & the other about sewerage (Cambridge Sewerage Ordinance?)

Perhaps city officials should consider finding some way to differentiate the two acronyms, so residents like me don't jump to conclusions & create problems for others!

Thanks to all for your consideration & apologies for creation confusion rather than clarification!

Linda Moussouris  
 2440 Mass. Ave.

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**From:** "Heather Hoffman" <heather.m.hoffman.1957@gmail.com>  
**To:** "rosemous" <rosemous@rcn.com>  
**Cc:** "Suzanne Blier" <suzannepblier@gmail.com>, "PSNA" <portersquare@googlegroups.com>, "Cambridge Neighborhood Association Google Group" <association-of-cambridge-neighborhoods@googlegroups.com>, "livable Cambridge open" <livablecambridge@googlegroups.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 10, 2023 2:41:56 PM  
**Subject:** Re: [ACN] Re: [Porter square] Public Sewage Pollution Meeting -- Register via ZOOM to attend at 6:00 on Nov. 15th, Wed.

I think your message went to the ACN google group at least. To answer your question, this is zoom only. The [entry on the city calendar](#) has more information. Over the years, the city calendar has become an extremely good source of information on city meetings (outside of school-related ones, which is a shame). I look at it more days than not, and it helps me misspend my life going to meetings, meetings and more meetings.

Heather

On Fri, Nov 10, 2023 at 2:21 PM <rosemous@rcn.com> wrote:

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No sir -- the message did NOT get through to the google groups. How come? Someone please help! Thanks very much!

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**From:** "rosemous" <[rosemous@rcn.com](mailto:rosemous@rcn.com)>

**To:** "Suzanne Blier" <[suzannepblier@gmail.com](mailto:suzannepblier@gmail.com)>

**Cc:** "PSNA" <[portersquare@googlegroups.com](mailto:portersquare@googlegroups.com)>, "Cambridge Neighborhood Association Google Group" <[association-of-cambridge-neighborhoods@googlegroups.com](mailto:association-of-cambridge-neighborhoods@googlegroups.com)>, "livable Cambridge open" <[livablecambridge@googlegroups.com](mailto:livablecambridge@googlegroups.com)>, "rosemous" <[rosemous@rcn.com](mailto:rosemous@rcn.com)>

**Sent:** Friday, November 10, 2023 2:17:41 PM

**Subject:** Re: [Porter square] Public Sewage Pollution Meeting -- Register via ZOOM to attend at 6:00 on Nov. 15th, Wed.

Suzanne et al --

I was able to register to attend the meeting -- which is surely on a vitally important topic up here in N. Cambridge -- by going to the reddit site below & registering to attend via Zoom. Only then did I find out that the meeting was at 6:00 on Nov. 15th, Wed. night. However, there is no indication where interested residents can attend a LIVE meeting -- so where would that be for those who want to go?

Moreover, as usual, I suspect I will NOT be able to get onto the google group sites -- which I have repeatedly tried to do. In fact, I have added my email address above because the only site I know I can readily access is Suzanne Blier's -- & I don't want to lose my email. Can anyone help me resolve my tech quandary?

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