



a community plan

Public Engagement Round 3 Results



WHAT WE DID

The planning team held two in-person events on May 6th and 7th, 2021 at the Valente Branch Library on Cambridge Street. The input exercises were also translated to an online tool that was available for the entire month of May. We solicited feedback on the draft vision statement for Cambridge Street and the preliminary draft ideas to achieve that vision. The results from those activities are outlined below.

WHO WE SPOKE TO

In all, about 350 participants shared their thoughts on the draft ideas for the plan either in person or online. 85% of participants identified as being near neighbors to the street, from East Cambridge, Inman Square or Wellington-Harrington.



Our CAMBRIDGE STREET VISION

Our Cambridge Street is a model for a 21st century Main Street. It's inviting, local, affordable, accessible and resilient.

Inviting

Continue to welcome diversity and celebrate our history as a destination for culture while embracing change.

Local

Support a mix of vibrant, local, and small businesses that serve the everyday needs of nearby residents, workers, students, and visitors alike.

Affordable

Support families, seniors, children, immigrants, people of color, those with disabilities, and from all economic and educational backgrounds in continuing to call this street home.

*Accessible
&
Resilient*

Create a truly safe and sustainable public realm, and a healthy, walkable environment that serves as the heart of our community.

88% of participants supported the suggested vision for Cambridge Street!

Of those that provided critical feedback, common themes included more specificity on the ideas to achieve these statements, or general comments on the design of the street.

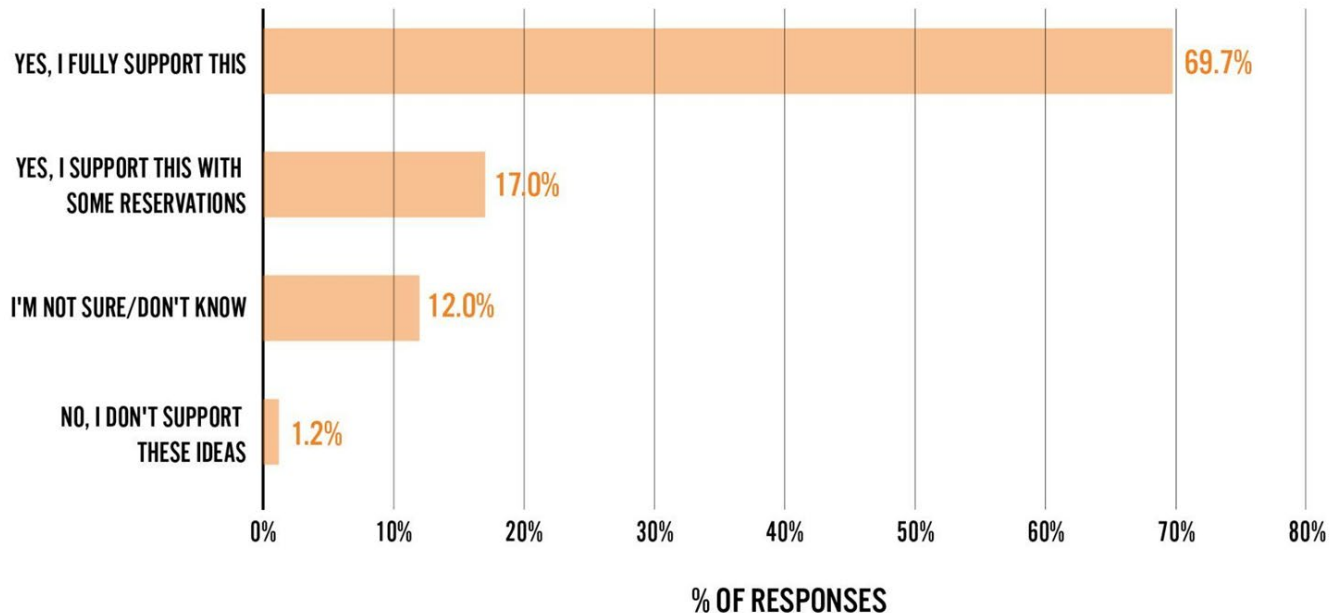
INVITING

Continue to welcome diversity and celebrate our history as a destination for culture while embracing change.

WOULD YOU SUPPORT...

CELEBRATING THE **UNIQUE IDENTITIES** ALONG CAMBRIDGE STREET FROM ONE BLOCK TO THE NEXT BY:

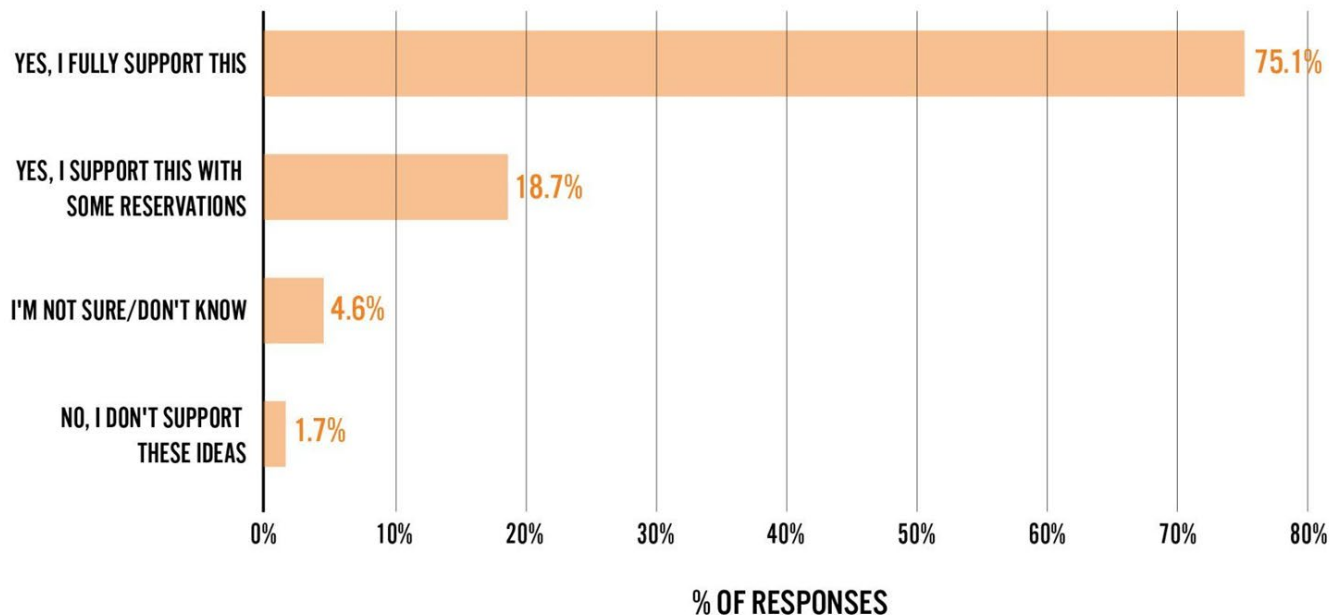
- Defining **different centers of activity** with interventions such as signage, public art and parklets to create welcoming spaces



WOULD YOU SUPPORT...

BRINGING THE **COMMUNITY TOGETHER** AND **CELEBRATE DIVERSITY** BY:

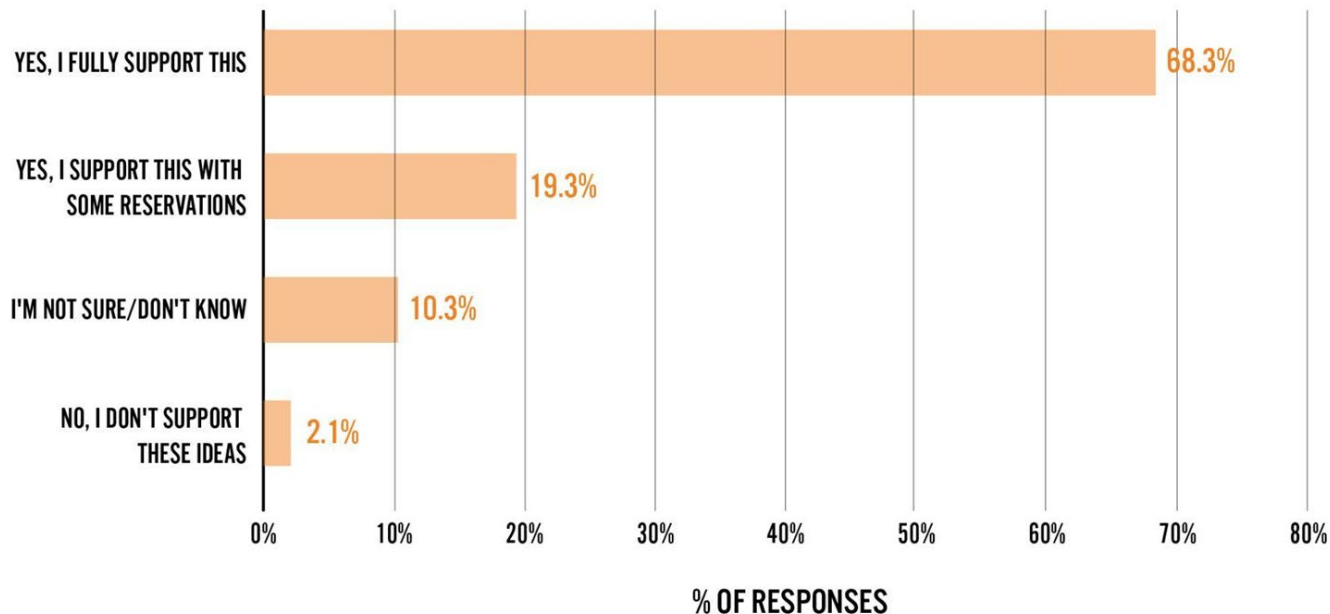
- Providing **additional cultural programming, festivals, and events** (and complementing existing ones)
- Advocating for **more funding** for community organizations to program public spaces



WOULD YOU SUPPORT...

CREATING A **MODERN STREET WITH A MIX OF USES THAT:**

- Celebrates the **beloved qualities and businesses** of Cambridge Street
- Evolves in a way that **embraces new vibrancy and change**

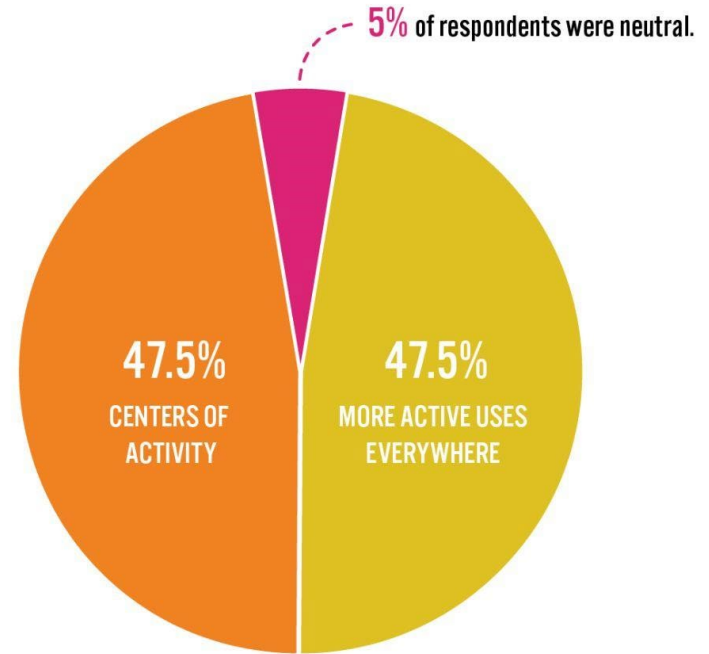


WOULD YOU RATHER...

PROMOTE CENTERS OF ACTIVITY WHILE PRESERVING SOME QUIET SPACES OR HAVE MORE ACTIVE USES EVERYWHERE

“Passive space is important for impromptu activities”


“I also want spaces to stop and sit under a tree along the street”



WHAT ADDITIONAL EVENTS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE ON CAMBRIDGE STREET?

COMMON RESPONSES

- FARMERS MARKETS
- FOOD-RELATED EVENTS (FEASTS, FOOD TRUCKS, FOOD CRAWL, ETC.)
- MUSIC EVENTS (JAZZ FESTIVAL, PORCHFEST)
- STEM & ART EVENTS



“Celebrate diversity itself and multi-cultural experience”



“Never want to see the feasts go!”

WHAT WOULD YOU DO TO FURTHER CELEBRATE THE CHARACTER OF CAMBRIDGE STREET?

COMMON RESPONSES

- DISPLAY HISTORY OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD & THROUGH PUBLIC ART
- DIVERSITY OF RESTAURANTS & LOCAL FOOD OPTIONS

“More murals to create a sense of place”

“Encourage mix of retail uses”

Signs that tell you to look up (and see this historic thing)!



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Most participants supported the draft ideas for an inviting and diverse street. Creating more events on Cambridge Street received the most support of all of the ideas presented.
- The participants were split on the right balance of activity for the street, feeling that it needs to **provide more things to do** while maintaining open spaces that are more quiet/passive in nature.
- There is support for maintaining the current events that happen on the street along with excitement for more events that brings the community together (mostly with food!) and celebrate local music and art.

WE HEAR YOU! YOUR INPUT INFORMS THE FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS, SUCH AS...

- Creating a pipeline of new events that bring the community together, celebrating different cultures through food and cultural events and highlighting diverse businesses.
- Identifying ways to maintain affordability over time to preserve business diversity that everyone appreciates about Cambridge Street.
- Including ways to highlight historic characteristics of the street in the public realm.

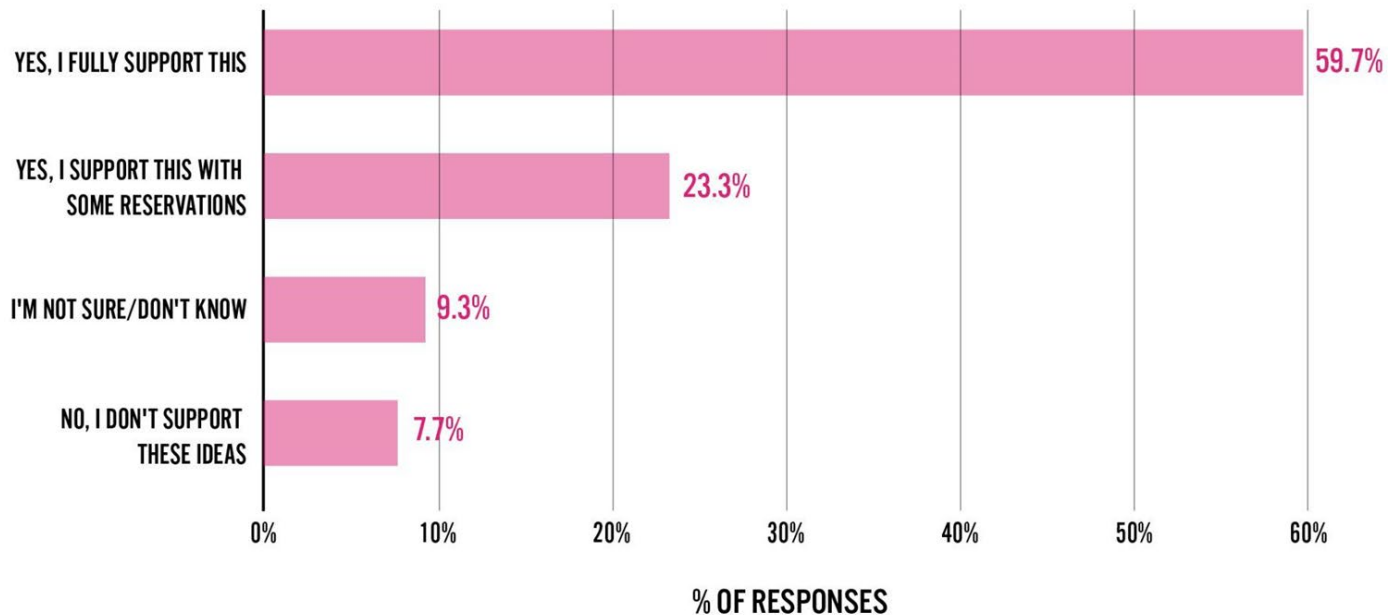
LOCAL

Support a mix of vibrant, local, and small businesses that serve the everyday needs of nearby residents, workers, students, and visitors alike.

WOULD YOU SUPPORT...

MAINTAINING A SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE COMMERCIAL SPACES FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES BY:

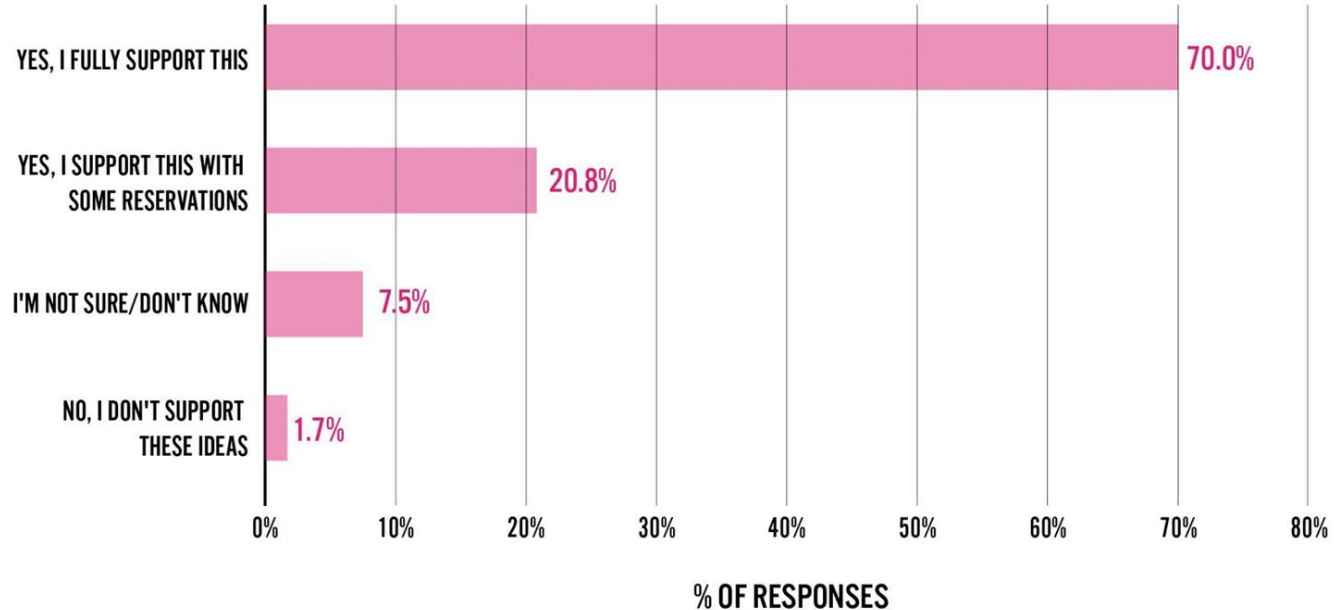
- Encouraging businesses to **own their properties**
- Reducing **development costs**
- Leveraging new development to **subsidize affordable storefronts**



WOULD YOU SUPPORT...

HELPING BUSINESSES CREATE ACTIVE GROUND FLOOR FRONTAGES BY:

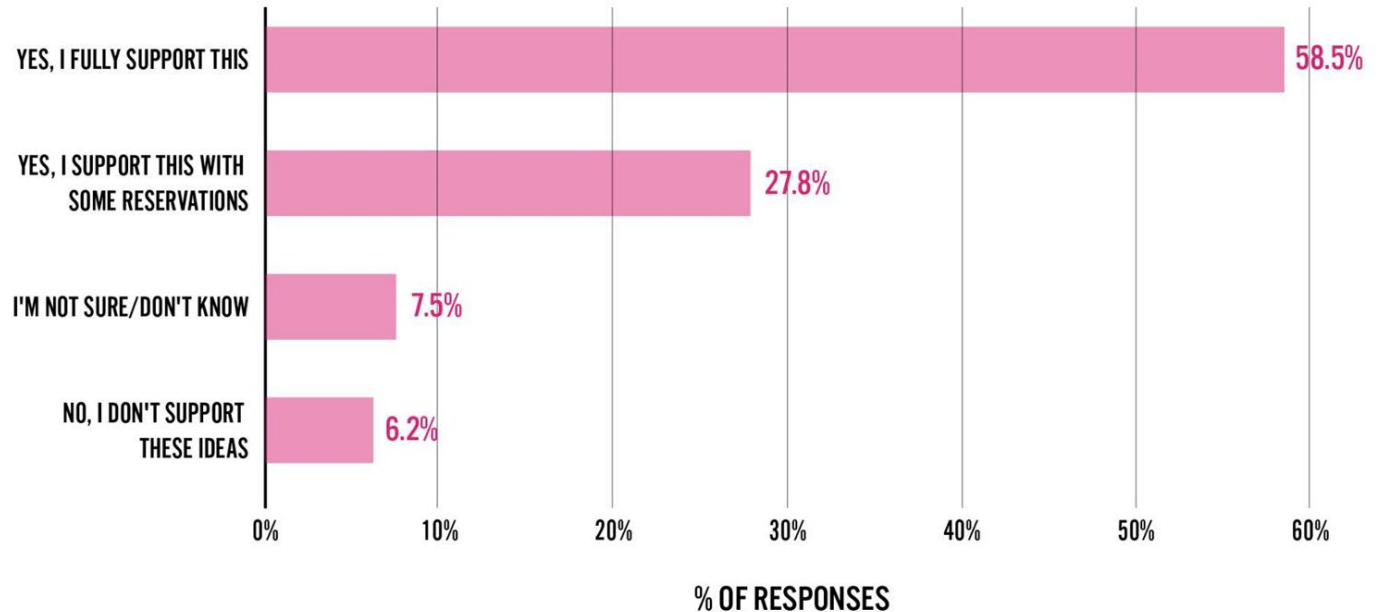
- Targeting marketing of the City's storefront improvement programs and resources for windows, signage, and merchandise display
- Marketing City programs for providing alternative storefront and street activation (including outdoor dining/retail, public realm utilization, pop up storefronts)



WOULD YOU SUPPORT...

ACTIVITY THROUGHOUT THE DAY FOR A RANGE OF USERS (NEARBY RESIDENTS, WORKERS AND VISITORS) BY:

- Preserving the **healthy mix of diverse businesses**
- Limiting the **size of lab development**
- Providing support to **long-time legacy businesses and small/local businesses** owned by woman, BIPOC, and foreign born residents



HOW WOULD YOU ACTIVATE GROUND FLOOR SPACES ON CAMBRIDGE STREET?

COMMON RESPONSES

- DAILY NEEDS STORES
- COMMUNITY SPACES (SENIOR CENTER, COMMUNITY WORK SPACE)
- RETAIL CONDOS & RENT SUBSIDIES FOR BUSINESSES
- OUTDOOR SEATING/DINING
- SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS FOR A BETTER PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE



“More space on sidewalks to enjoy storefronts”



“Provide mix of ground-floor retail and residential”

HOW WOULD YOU CELEBRATE & SUPPORT LONG-TIME LEGACY BUSINESSES & WOMEN/MINORITY-OWNED BUSINESSES?

COMMON RESPONSES

- AFFORDABLE RENTS FOR BUSINESSES
- TAX ON NEW DEVELOPMENTS TO SUPPORT LEGACY INFRASTRUCTURE

“Limit/stop labs on Cambridge St.”

“Pair small businesses with local HS students for internships”



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Key to the life of the corridor is **supporting a mix of vibrant, local, and small businesses.**
- There is agreement about supporting existing small businesses, managing uses that can price out other small businesses (such as labs), and other ideas to keep commercial rents low like allowing more density to subsidize street level storefronts.

WE HEAR YOU! YOUR INPUT INFORMS THE FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS, SUCH AS...

- Maintaining and increasing the number of active ground floor uses on Cambridge Street
- Identifying ways to support existing small businesses and subsidize more affordable storefronts.

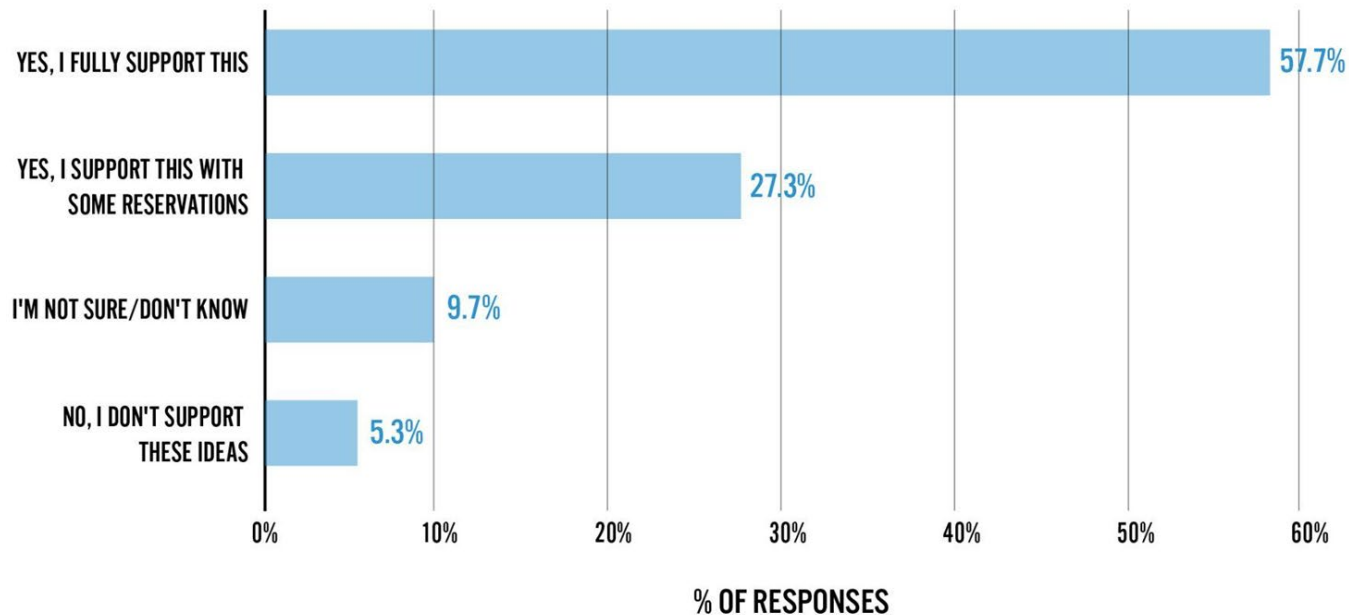
AFFORDABLE

Support families, seniors, children, immigrants, people of color, those with disabilities, and from all economic and educational backgrounds in continuing to call this street home.

WOULD YOU SUPPORT...

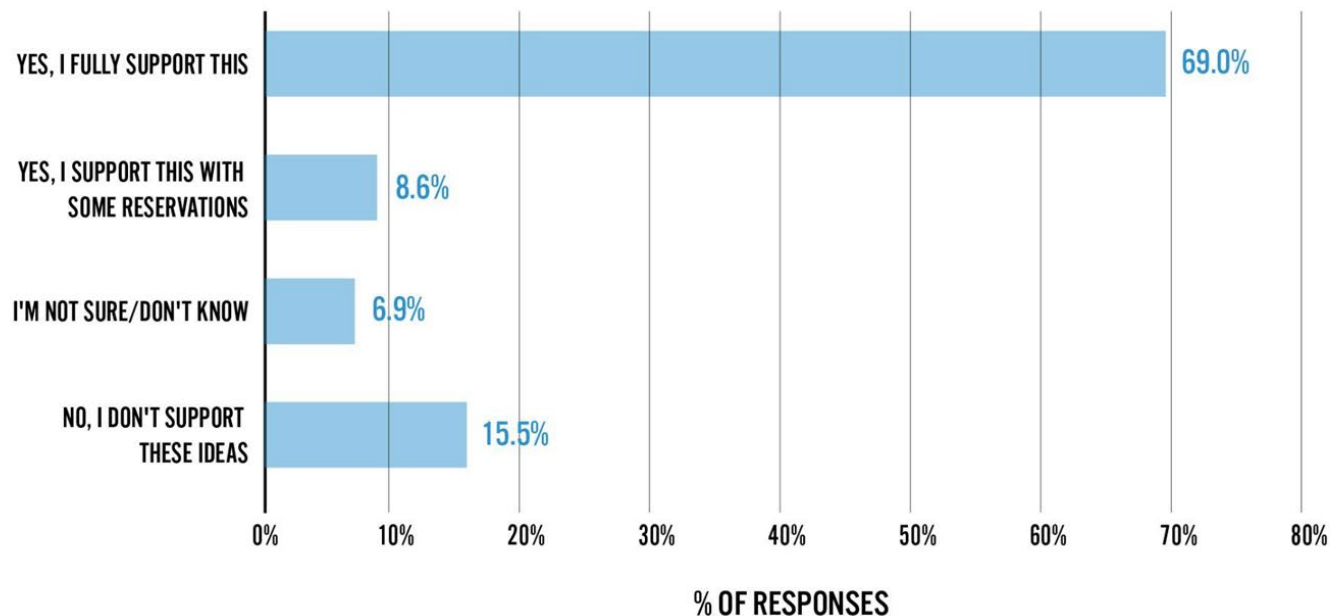
PRESERVING EXISTING HOUSING STOCK BY:

- Considering a **limitation on the conversion** of residential units to commercial units
- Exploring ways to provide incentives for landlords to **keep rents low**



WOULD YOU SUPPORT...

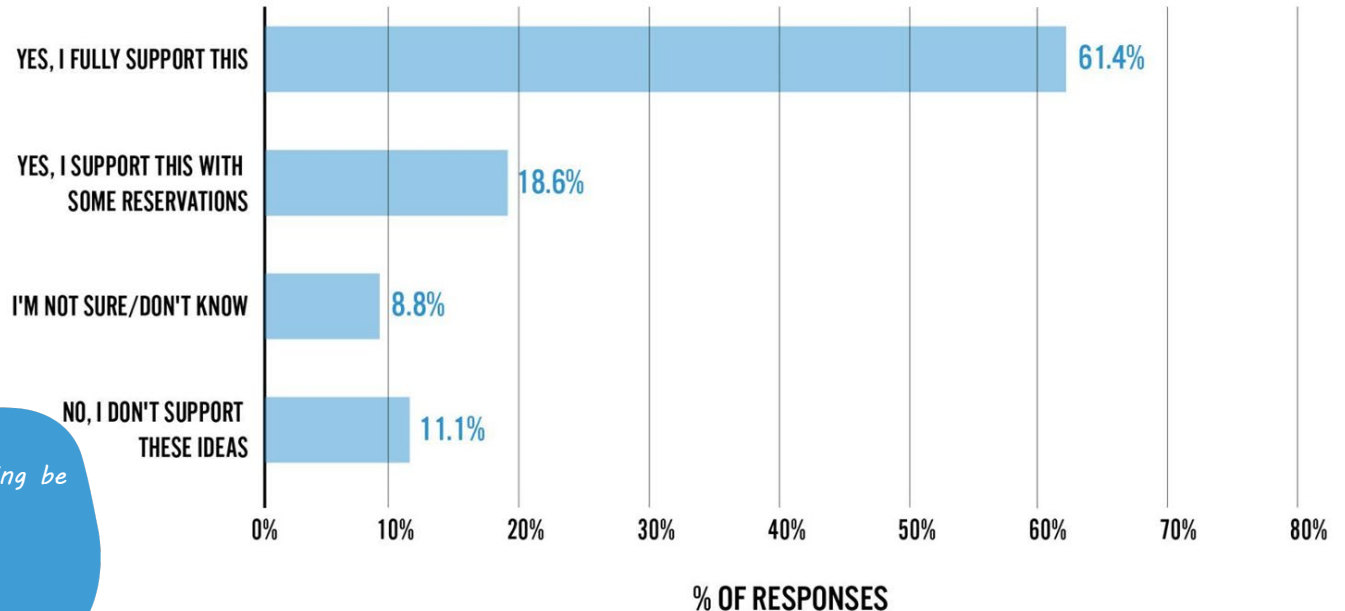
ENCOURAGING A **MIX OF UNIT TYPES** THAT ACCOMMODATE **DIFFERENT HOUSEHOLD SIZES AND STAGES OF LIFE**, SO THAT FAMILIES AND SENIORS CAN CONTINUE TO CALL CAMBRIDGE STREET HOME



WOULD YOU SUPPORT...

ENCOURAGING HIGHER DENSITY MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT AND MORE HOUSING UNITS ALONG CAMBRIDGE STREET WHILE MAINTAINING THE EXISTING CHARACTER OF THE STREET BY:

- Considering zoning changes such as removing setback and parking requirements
- Exploring programs that incentivizes mixed use buildings (active storefronts on the first floor and residential units above)



"I would only support more height if it excluded commercial AND provided increased affordable housing"

"Will new building be ugly? Density is great when it's beautiful"



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Affordability in Cambridge is a concern for most participants.
- 80% of participants fully supported or somewhat supported encouraging higher density mixed use development and more housing units along Cambridge Street.
- Although there is support for higher densities along Cambridge Street, respondents added that there should be **limits to density** (no more than 5 or 6 floors) that **well-designed buildings** are important if more density is going to be added. Others would favor additional open spaces and greening.

WE HEAR YOU! YOUR INPUT INFORMS THE FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS, SUCH AS...

- Increasing the supply of housing on the street where possible.
- Creating design guidelines for new development that occurs along Cambridge Street.

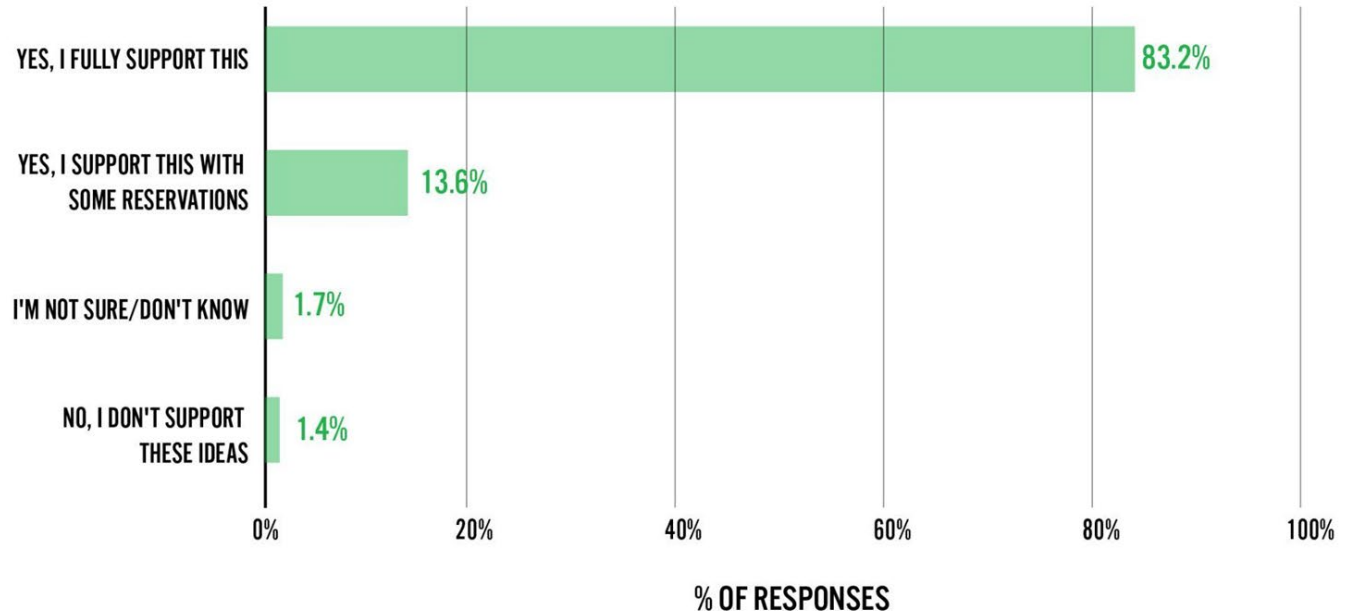
ACCESSIBLE & RESILIENT

Create a truly safe and sustainable public realm,
and a healthy, walkable environment that serves
as the heart of our community.

WOULD YOU SUPPORT...

INTEGRATING MEASURES TO ADAPT CAMBRIDGE STREET FOR CLIMATE RESILIENCY BY:

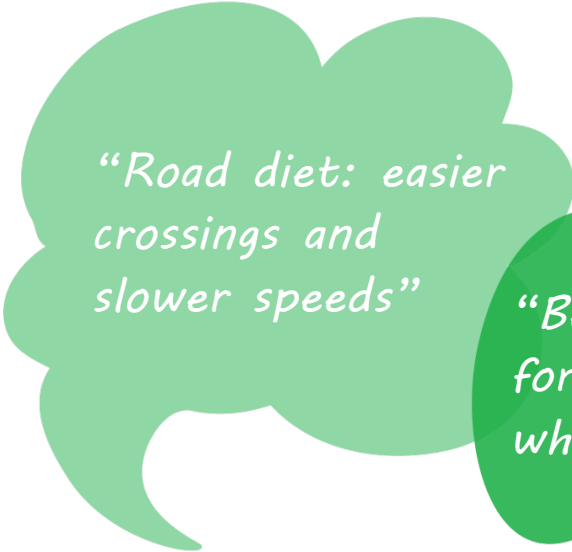
- Supporting **urban biodiversity** by increasing tree cover, landscaping, and permeability of hard surfaces in the public right of way
- Advocating for cool pavements, cool roofs, solar canopies, shade structures and additional tree canopy to **reduce heat impacts**
- Exploring the feasibility of **shared green energy and efficient systems** for private property owners
- **Mitigating street flooding** by incorporating green infrastructure




WHAT ARE YOUR IDEAS FOR SUPPORTING PEOPLE WALKING ON CAMBRIDGE STREET?

COMMON RESPONSES

- MORE TREES
- SAFER CROSSWALKS & INTERSECTIONS
- BETTER TRASH COLLECTION
- IMPROVED SIDEWALKS
- MORE OUTDOOR SEATING & PUBLIC SPACES



“Road diet: easier crossings and slower speeds”



“Better curb cuts for strollers and wheelchairs”


WHAT ARE YOUR IDEAS FOR IMPROVING LOADING & DELIVERIES ON CAMBRIDGE STREET?

COMMON RESPONSES

- RESTRICT DELIVERY TIMES TO EARLY MORNINGS AND/OR LATE EVENINGS
- MAKE IT EASIER FOR BUSINESSES TO HAVE DELIVERIES



“Need to preserve space for deliveries”



“Very clear wayfinding to loading zones”

WHAT ARE YOUR IDEAS FOR SUPPORTING VISITORS ARRIVING BY PRIVATE VEHICLES ON CAMBRIDGE STREET?

COMMON RESPONSES

- PARKING METERS WITH DYNAMIC PRICING
- PROVIDE MORE PARKING (OR LEAVE PARKING ALONE)

“Demand pricing meters to encourage [parking] turnover”

“Signs to direct visitors to public lots”

WHAT ARE YOUR IDEAS FOR SUPPORTING PEOPLE BICYCLING ON CAMBRIDGE STREET?

COMMON RESPONSES

- SEPARATED BIKE LANES/IMPROVED BIKE SAFETY
- NO DEDICATED BIKE LANES
- MORE BLUEBIKE STATIONS & BIKE PARKING
- DECREASE CAR SPEEDS ON CAMBRIDGE STREET

22

SUPPORTED SEPARATED
BIKE LANES

VS.

8

DID NOT SUPPORT
SEPARATED BIKE LANES

“Cambridge St. is narrow enough already and can't support bike lanes”

“Separate car lanes (it's a matter of perspective)”

WHAT ARE YOUR IDEAS FOR SUPPORTING PEOPLE TAKING TRANSIT/PARATRANSIT ON CAMBRIDGE STREET?

COMMON RESPONSES

- **BETTER BUS SERVICE** (INCREASED FREQUENCY, BETTER CONNECTIVITY, EXPANDED HOURS)
- **IMPROVED BUS STOPS** (BUS SHELTERS, SEATING FOR ELDERLY/DISABLED)
- **IMPROVED PEDESTRIAN SAFETY**

“Expand operating hours of buses for evenings and weekends”

“Please prioritize accessibility, greenery, and cleanliness wherever possible. Seasonal decorations are an added bonus!”

WHAT ARE YOUR IDEAS FOR ACTIVATING UNDERUTILIZED SPACES ON CAMBRIDGE STREET?

COMMON RESPONSES

- MORE GREEN SPACE
- MORE OUTDOOR SEATING/PUBLIC PATIOS

“Free open space to gather as neighbors”

“Pocket parks in parking spaces with trees and screening plants”

WHAT ADDITIONAL IDEAS DO YOU HAVE TO ENHANCE THE STREET?

COMMON RESPONSES

- SAFER INTERSECTIONS
- EASIER & SAFER ACCESS TO LECHMERE STATION
- BETTER PEDESTRIAN & CYCLING CONNECTIONS TO KEY DESTINATIONS BEYOND CAMBRIDGE ST.

Improving sidewalks and enforcing snow cleaning is important for those of us with strollers and wheelchairs.

“Blinking lights at pedestrian crossings”



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- There is general support making the street safer for people walking, biking, and using transit on the street. Loss of on street parking continues to be a common concern among some residents and businesses.
- Ideas for activating underutilized spaces on Cambridge Street to bring the community together include a farmers market, more outdoor dining, more programming and events, and places to sit and “people watch”.
- Climate resilience and more green space is a priority, with 97% of participants fully supporting ideas to make Cambridge Street greener and more sustainable.

WE HEAR YOU! YOUR INPUT INFORMS THE FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS, SUCH AS...

- Exploring ways to help mitigate the impact of the proposed loss of on-street parking when the separated bike lanes are installed.
- Bringing community together through events and programming
- Increasing the tree canopy and maximizing the use of green spaces along the street.