

How-To Guide: Commenting at a Public Meeting

Commenting at a public meeting

Speaking at public meeting on behalf of LivableStreets is another powerful tool. Identifying yourself as an advocacy committee member gives you the opportunity to leverage our membership and the expertise of the Advocacy Committee.

To prepare for speaking at a public meeting:

- Draft some simple bullet points that include:
 - A description of LivableStreets Alliance (see mission statement in Section 4) and a description of the number LivableStreets members in the projects effected area when applicable.
 - Specific recommendations if there are issues that need to be address as well as specific feedback for positive elements of the plan/issue you are commenting on.
- Share your draft talking points with the Committee for feedback and approval.
- Ask if others in the Committee are also attending the meeting/invite your friends to join to and learn about your advocacy work!

When commenting:

- Identify yourself with your full name and as a member of the LivableStreets Alliance Advocacy Committee.
- Keep your comments short (less that 60 seconds when possible), clear, constructive and concise.
- Remember to thank whoever you are speaking to for the opportunity and to highlight things you do like.

After the meeting:

- Send notes on how the meeting when to the Advocacy Committee and be sure to highlight and follow up that committee members could do (i.e. send a comment letter, reach out to decision makers, etc.)

Sample comments:

Draft Remarks: Babcock StreetPublic Meeting April 13, 2016

I am Mark Tedrow, representing LivableStreets Alliance Advocacy Committee. LivableStreets supports safer, calmer streets for all people, safer more convenient crossings for people on foot, safer, less stressful bikeways for people on bikes. We support separated bike lanes (cycle tracks) on Babcock Street to create a safe place for all people from ages 8 to eighty to ride bikes. We support measures to make neighborhood streets a place for neighbors, not just a travel way for cars.

We believe that Option 6 provides the most workable option for the Babcock neighborhood to achieve these goals. It balances the neighborhood desire to retain supplemental residential parking with traffic calming, safer crossings, and safe, less stressful separated bike lanes for people of all ages.

Option 4 is a poor choice –it is overly reliant on speed humps to reduce traffic speed, it will very likely cause through traffic to divert to nearby streets so drivers can avoid them. Riding on a street with sharrows is an unpleasant task most people on bikes and frustrates drivers who don't like being stuck behind bikes. People simply do not feel safe sharing a road with large, heavy, intimidating vehicles. People on foot know this –it's why we have sidewalks.

LivableStreets thanks the Transportation Board, the Transportation Department of DPW, the Brookline Bikes Advisory Committee, and the Babcock Street working group for all the hard work that they have put into designing a better, calmer, and safer Babcock Street.