



# TRANSPORTATION & PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMITTEE

## COMMITTEE MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Monday, March 17, 2025

10:00 AM

Sullivan Chamber

**The Transportation and Public Utilities Committee will hold a public hearing with MIT transportation experts and City staff to brainstorm ways to better accommodate mobility for all users as we continue to promote the use of sustainable modes.**

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Burhan Azeem	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Paul F. Toner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ayesha M. Wilson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Catherine Zusy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

A public meeting of the Cambridge City Council's Transportation and Public Utilities Committee was held on Monday, March 17, 2025. The meeting was Called to Order at 10:00a.m. by the Chair, Councillor Zusy. Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023 adopted by Massachusetts General Court and approved by the Governor, the City is authorized to use remote participation. 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 Azeem – Absent

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present/Remote

Councillor Toner – Absent

Councillor Wilson – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Zusy – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

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

The Chair, Councillor Zusy noted that the Call of the meeting was to hold a public hearing with MIT transportation experts and City staff to brainstorm ways to better accommodate mobility for all users as we continue to promote the use of sustainable modes. Present at the meeting was Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Commissioner, Brooke McKenna, Director of Transportation Planning (TP&T), Stephanie Groll, Commissioner of the Department of Public Works (DPW), Kathy Watkins, Assistant Commissioner for Parking Management, Stephanie McAuliffe, Coordinator-ADA/Executive Director, Rachel Tanenhaus, and Division Head from the Department of Human Services (DHSP), Susan Pacheco. Present from MIT were Professor Joseph Ferreira and Professor Jinhua Zhao. Transportation Entrepreneur and Co-Founder of Zipcar, Robin Chase, was also present. Councillor Nolan was present and remote, and Mayor Simmons joined the meeting in person at 11:35a.m.

The Chair Councillor Zusy offered opening remarks and read from the following statement (not verbatim).

We are lucky today to have 3 transportation experts with us, 2 professors from MIT and one celebrated transportation entrepreneur. We also have outstanding City staff from Council on Aging, Commission for Persons with Disabilities, and the new Transportation Department here to answer questions. My hope is that this program will be a productive, constructive problem-solving session that yields solutions for Cambridge. Our charge: to brainstorm ways to better accommodate mobility for all users as we continue to promote the use of sustainable transportation modes with a goal for Cambridge to only use renewable energy by 2035 and reach zero emissions by 2050.

With our (2015) Net Zero Transportation Action Plan, Cambridge is committed to reducing car use and encouraging residents to walk, bike and use mass transit. I commend with this goal. Here's our challenge: Our 51k households still have 42k vehicles and we'll be growing our population over the next decades and most Americans still rely on cars. We're also in a transitional period of transportation with major mass transit improvements probably a decade away. So, how do we balance the needs of this important goal—we all want to save the planet!—and those who must drive: families with infants, the disabled, elderly, our merchants, service workers, shoppers and visitors? What are some create ways that we can make using sustainable transportation modes an easier choice? How can we get more cars off the road? 2nd cars? First cars? —so that those who must drive and park can? And how can we ease the pain of those who must drive and park, especially as we eliminate parking and parking requirements for new development? If any panel can help us to sort this out, it will be this one. They have studied and led transportation projects all over the world. Please let me introduce: Joseph Ferreira, MIT Professor of Urban Information Systems, Jinhua Zhao, MIT Professor of Cities and Transportation, and Robin Chase, a transportation entrepreneur. Cambridge staff who will respond to questions: Susan Pacheco, Executive Director, Council on Aging, Rachel Tanenhaus, Executive Director, Commission for Persons with Disabilities, Brooke McKenna, Transportation Commissioner, Stephanie Groll, Asst. Commissioner for Transportation Planning, and Stephanie McAuliffe, Asst. Comm. for Parking, Management & Traffic.

The Chair, Councillor Zusy recognized Professor Joseph Ferreira who gave a presentation titled “How to Better Accommodate Mobility for All Users”. The presentation was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet. The presentation provided information on resources, use of public “Right of Way”, transit access and sustainability, and auto dependence and mobility bundling.

The Chair, Councillor Zusy recognized Robin Chase who gave a presentation titled “City of Cambridge Background and Recommendations”. The presentation was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet. The presentation offered information on transportation policy and recommendations.

The Chair, Councillor Zusy recognized Professor Jinhua Zhao who gave a presentation titled “Decarbonizing Urban Mobility MIT's contribution: campus and beyond” (Attachment A). The presentation was shared on the screen for the public and attendees of the meeting to view. The presentation provided information of MIT's efforts and background to creating sustainable transportation.

The Chair, Councillor Zusy recognized Stephanie Groll who offered a brief overview of the data that was presented at the Health and Environment Committee hearing on February 24, 2025, which was to discuss and review the Net Zero Transportation Plan. The presentation related to this meeting can be found on the City's Website under the Open Meeting Portal.

The Chair, Councillor Zusy recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who had clarifying question for Robin Chase related to the suggested policy of stored cars. Robin Chase provided examples of how to enforce cars that do not move on the street and take up public space. Councillor Zusy noted that street cleaning can also encourage people to move their cars. Stephanie McAuliffe reviewed the current storage regulations in the City, noting that people using a visitor pass need to move their car every 24 hours and if they do not, a ticket will be issued. Brooke McKenna shared that it has been the policy that cars with a resident sticker do not need to move and reviewed street cleaning procedures. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler asked if there were any suggestions towards incentives for people who do not have a car. Robin Chase shared information about a pilot program in Washington D.C. where low-income households receive incentives, such as transit passes or shared bike services, for not having a car. Jinhua Zha and Joseph Ferreira agreed that a program like this would be beneficial for anyone and create plans that make it seem mode neutral rather than just a penalty for someone who does drive. Stephanie Groll provided information on the Parking and Transportation Demand Ordinance, noting that it has been in place for more than 25 years, and provides incentives such as the ideas that are being discussed. Stephanie Groll added that there is an annual update of the Ordinance, with the next one being this Spring.

The Chair, Councillor Zusy recognized Councillor Wilson who noted that this is an important, but privileged conversation, and should be inclusive to everyone in the community, many of whom could not attend the meeting. Councillor Wilson pointed out how a vehicle could be something a person needs to go about their day

to day and provided the example of a single mother having to work two jobs. Councillor Wilson stressed the importance of communicating with neighboring communities to discuss how they are also enhancing their mobility efforts, pointing out that Cambridge is always a leader, and it is important that other communities are working towards the same goals. Brooke McKenna responded and shared the different collaborations with communities and how many communities approach Cambridge for guidance and agreed it should be a shared goal that everyone needs to have to make the region more sustainable. Stephanie Groll added that there is a coordination group that works with surrounding communities on the Transportation Demand Ordinance to help address traffic congestion and work together to align goals. Councillor Wilson asked if neighboring communities have similar emission gas goals. Stephanie Groll shared that Somerville and Boston do and can investigate further into other neighboring communities. Robin Chase offered comments around the point of privilege and provided examples of why owning a car is a privilege in today's world. Rachel Tanenhaus also addressed privilege and explained various scenarios in which there is no handicapped accessibility and stressed that many of the suggestions that have been discussed are discriminatory because they are not available to everyone. Susan Pacheco addressed concerns about making sure older adults who require different forms of assistance, such as home health care, and the need for car accessibility for those who are driving into the community to provide those services. Councillor Zusy shared that if there was only one car per person it could help some of the issues and concerns that are being raised.

The Chair, Councillor Zusy recognized Mayor Simmons who pointed out that going car free is not possible for everyone and agreed that there are discriminatory issues that need to be recognized and to include senior citizens in those conversations. Councillor Zusy agreed that it is important to respect the needs of those who do need to have vehicle access in the community while also creating sustainability goals. Jinhua Zhao noted the importance of providing alternatives for people who do not need cars to help support those who do. Mayor Simmons explained that it is important to have conversations on sustainability, but even more importantly to educate the community on the goals the city is trying to achieve. Jinhua Zhao added that MIT wants to help educate and is available to help the City.

The Chair, Councillor Zusy recognized Stephanie Groll who pointed out that many of these issues have come up in the Parking Engagement Study from 2022 and the Net Zero Transportation Plan. Stephanie Groll shared that City staff have been learning and listening to the community needs as it relates to transportation.

**The Chair, Councillor Zusy made a motion to extend the meeting by ten minutes.**

**Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.**

Councillor Azeem – Absent

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Absent

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

**Yes – 3, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.**

The Chair, Councillor Zusy recognized Councillor Nolan who shared examples of different bike programs that residents, including students, have access to. Councillor Nolan highlighted the importance of having smart goals to ensure the needs of all residents are being included and met. Councillor Nolan added that affordable and reliable transit across the City is needed and said that she looks forward to having more inclusive conversations.

The Chair, Councillor Zusy provided closing remarks and pointed out that she believes this is only the beginning of the conversation. Councillor Zusy added that it is important to make sure the sustainable transportation options that are available are clear to the public and create smart goals as the conversations continue. Councillor Zusy asked if any of the experts had closing remarks.

The Chair, Councillor Zusy recognized Robin Chase who suggested that Uber and Lyft fall under the same umbrella as taxis as well as a pilot program where elder food services deliver meals on e-bikes.

The Chair, Councillor Zusy recognized Joseph Ferreria who noted that transportation is important, but adjustments need to be made to allow car accessibility use to those who do not have an alternative. Joseph Ferreira provided an example that is underway in San Francisco is doing to address parking.

The Chair, Councillor Zusy recognized Jinhua Zhao who noted that it is important to also encourage large corporations to assist with sustainability goals in collaboration with the City and residents.

The Chair, Councillor Zusy recognized Mayor Simmons who thanked the experts for the information they shared and reminded everyone not to lose sight of those who are not in the room and a part of the conversation.

The Chair, Councillor Zusy thanked everyone for their hard work and shared she looks forward to more discussions.

**The Chair, Councillor Zusy made a motion to adjourn.**

**Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.**

Councillor Azeem – Absent

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Absent

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

**Yes – 3, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.**

**The Transportation and Public Utilities Committee meeting adjourned at approximately 12:10p.m.**

**Attachment A** – Presentation from Professor Jinhua Zhao.

**Attachment B** – Communication from the public.

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

[https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/977?view\\_id=1&redirect=true](https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/977?view_id=1&redirect=true)

**A communication was received from Robin Chase, CoFounder of Zipcar, NUMO, transmitting a presentation related to transportation.**

**A communication was received from Professor Joseph Ferreira, Jr., MIT, transmitting a presentation related to mobility and transportation.**

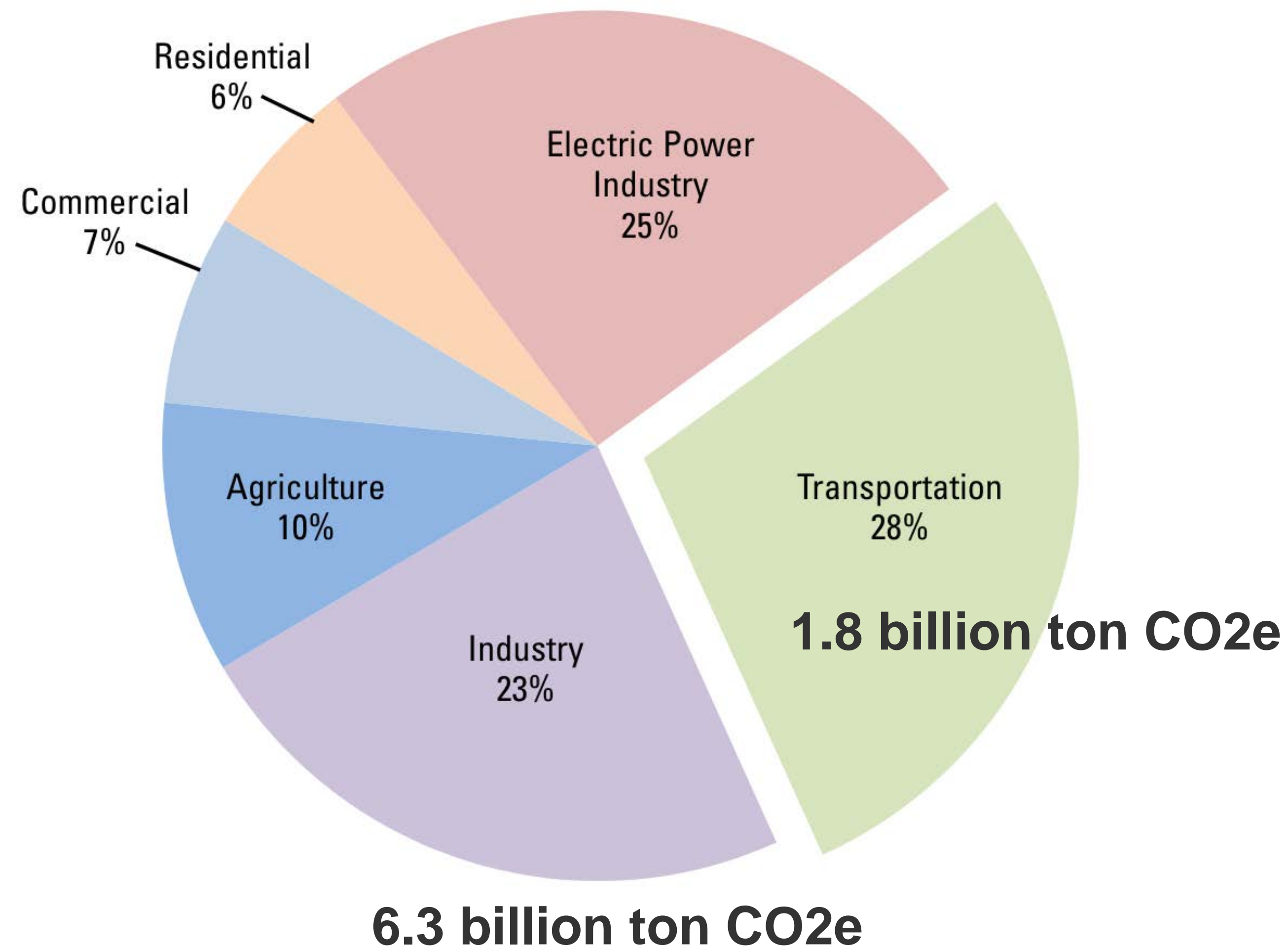
# Decarbonizing Urban Mobility

MIT's contribution: campus and beyond

Prof. Jinhua Zhao

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

# U.S. GHG Emissions by Economic Sector 2022



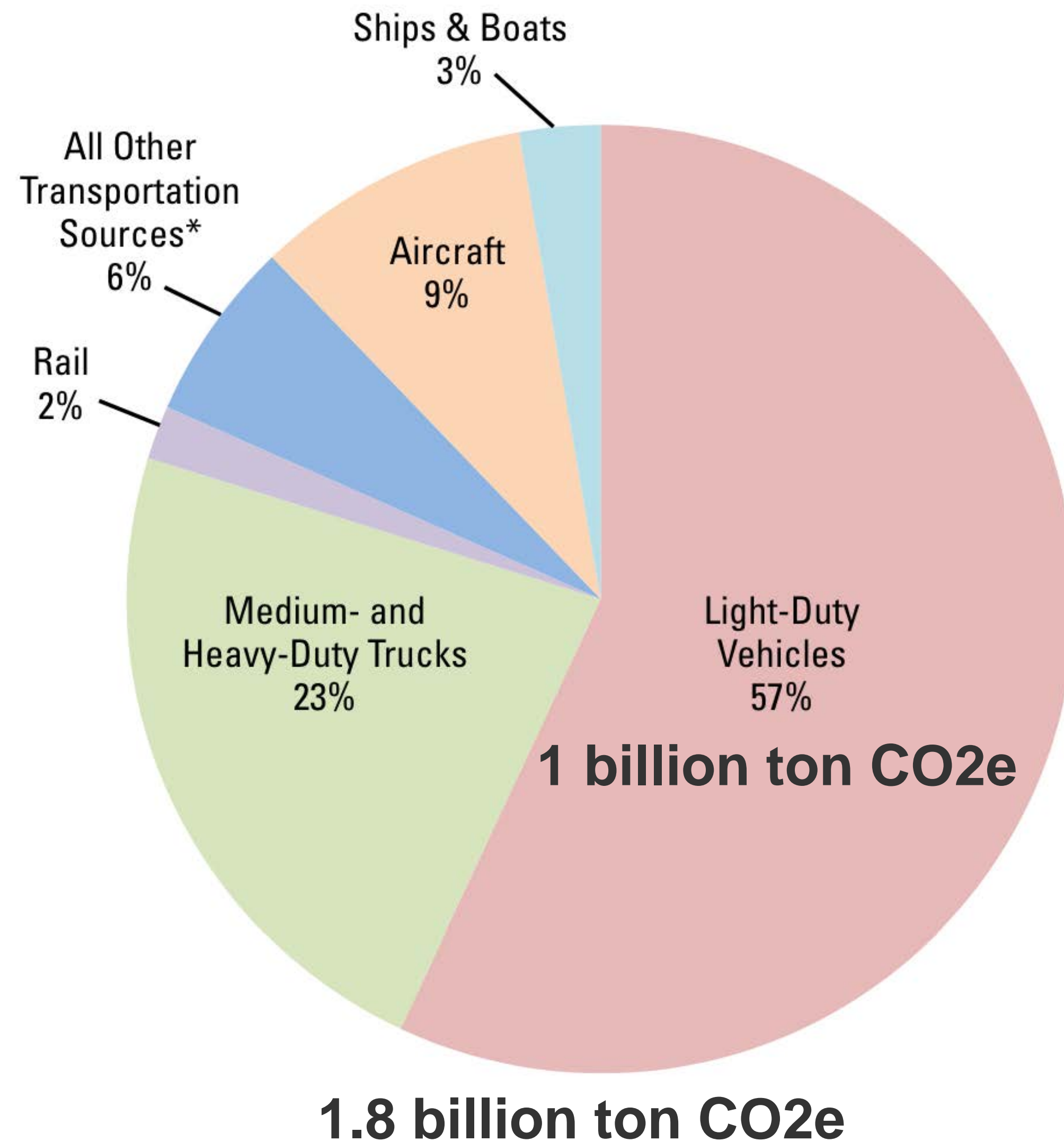
**US: 28%**

**VS**

**Global: 16%**

# US GHG Emissions: Transportation

## 2022



**Individual behavior matters more**

- 1. Electric vs. Gas/Diesel**
- 2. Private car vs. transit vs. walking/cycling**



# How do we decarbonize urban transportation?



## Electrification

The car is the dominant mode of mobility.  
Let's fix the car.



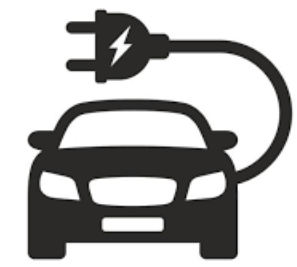
## Behavioral Shift

The car is the problem.  
Let's reduce car dependency.





# How do we decarbonize urban transportation?



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Remote work  
?

It is easier  
to lecture others  
than to do it ourselves

How is MIT doing?



# Kendall Square





Substantial variation among corporations in Kendall Square  
in terms of sustainable transportation

65% ←→ 25%

Commuting mode share by car



# MIT Today









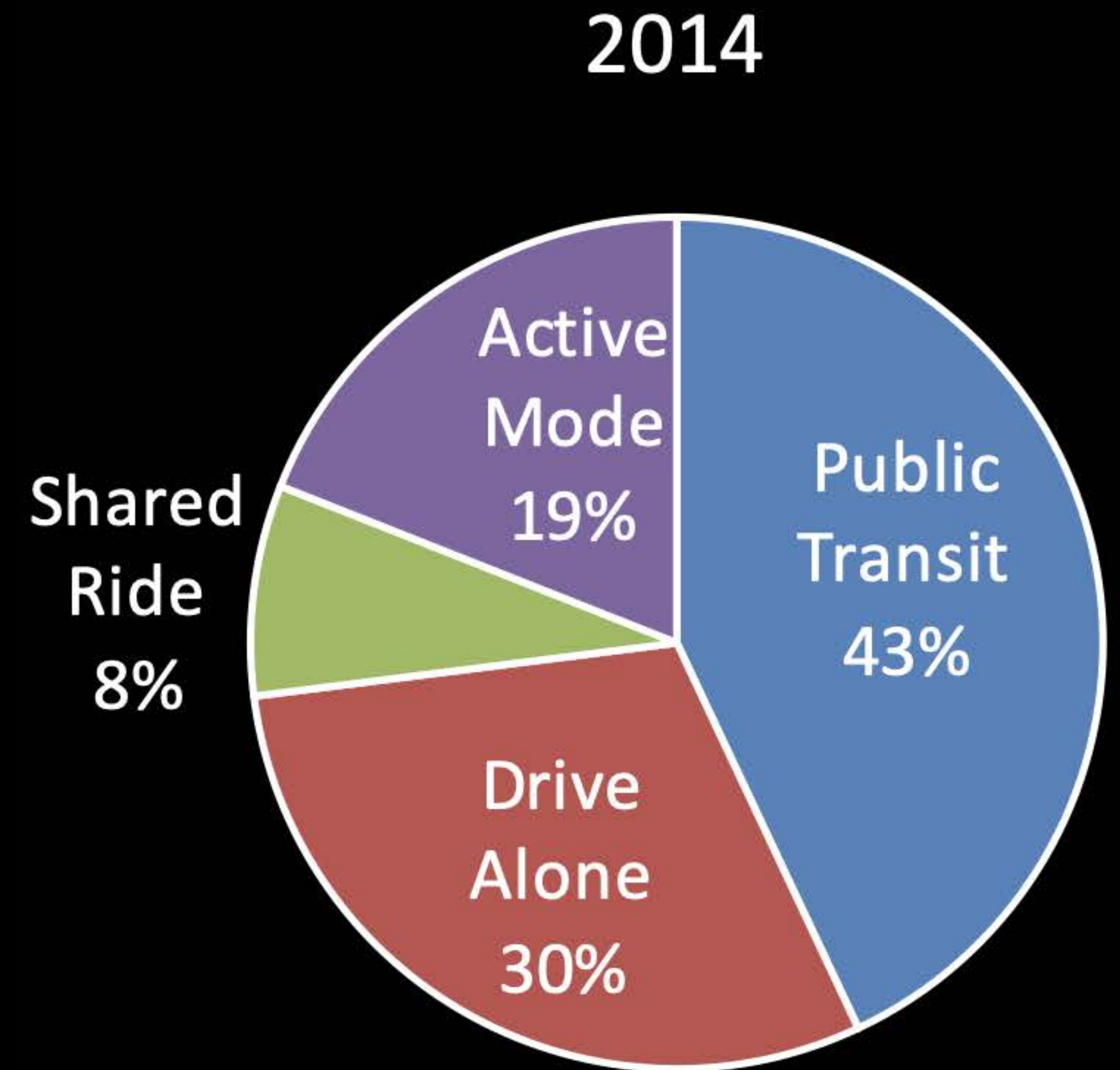








MIT has gone a long way...



# accessMIT

A broader vision that seeks to provide MIT with affordable, flexible, and low-carbon mobility choices.

MIT Transit Lab

+

MIT Office of Sustainability

+

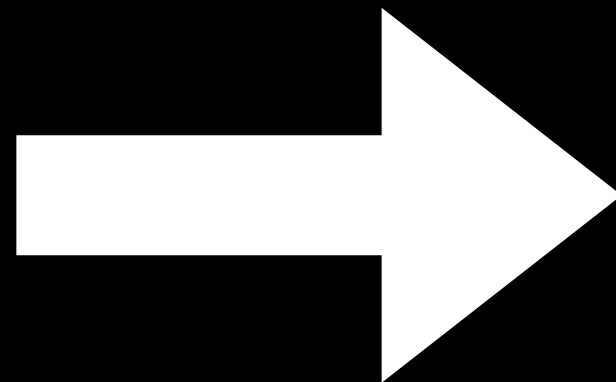
MIT Committee for Transportation and Parking

# AccessMIT



Shift to daily parking pricing

\$1,760 per year



\$10 / day

+\$100 registration

Capped at \$1,760



# AccessMIT



Shift to daily parking pricing

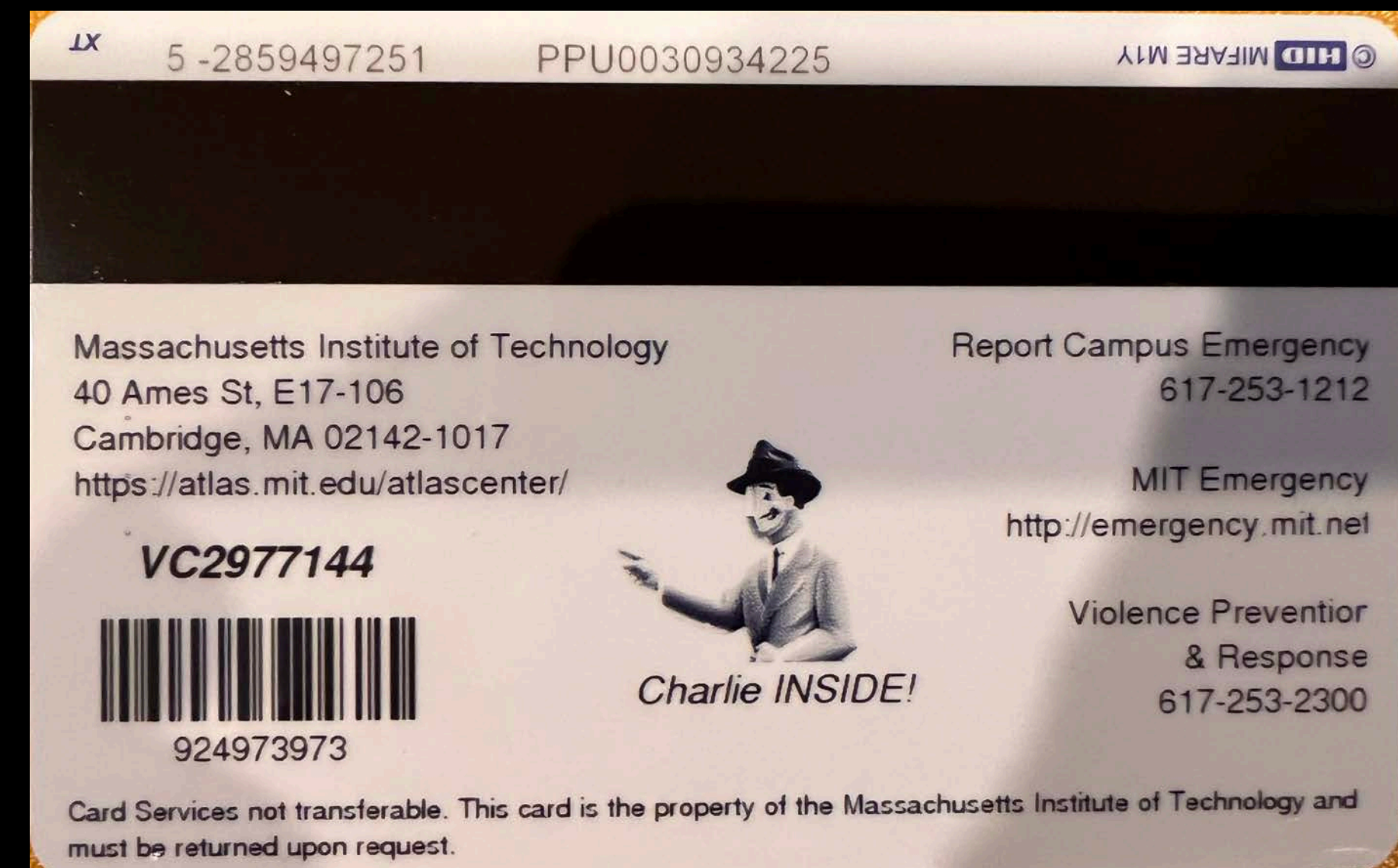


Free bus & subway pass

“Charlie Inside”

Free

Convenient



## Before

- Driving: free
- Transit: \$4

## After

- Driving: \$10
- Transit: free

# Financial Arrangement



To Employee

Unlimited Use Pass

To MIT

Pay-per-use

## AccessMIT



Shift to daily parking pricing



Free universal bus & subway transit pass



Increased commuter rail monthly pass subsidy



New parking subsidy at transit stations



Online commuter dashboard





## John Sterman

*Jay W. Forrester Professor of Management,  
MIT Sloan School of Management*



# I'm in climate action mode

John Sterman is a professor who not only teaches about system dynamics and sustainability—he sees them in action, every day. He's committed to a healthy, low-carbon commute so he bikes to work rain, snow, or shine. Because driving less makes a big difference to our campus, community, and the planet.

**Your commute counts. Switch it up.**  
[web.mit.edu/accessmit](http://web.mit.edu/accessmit)



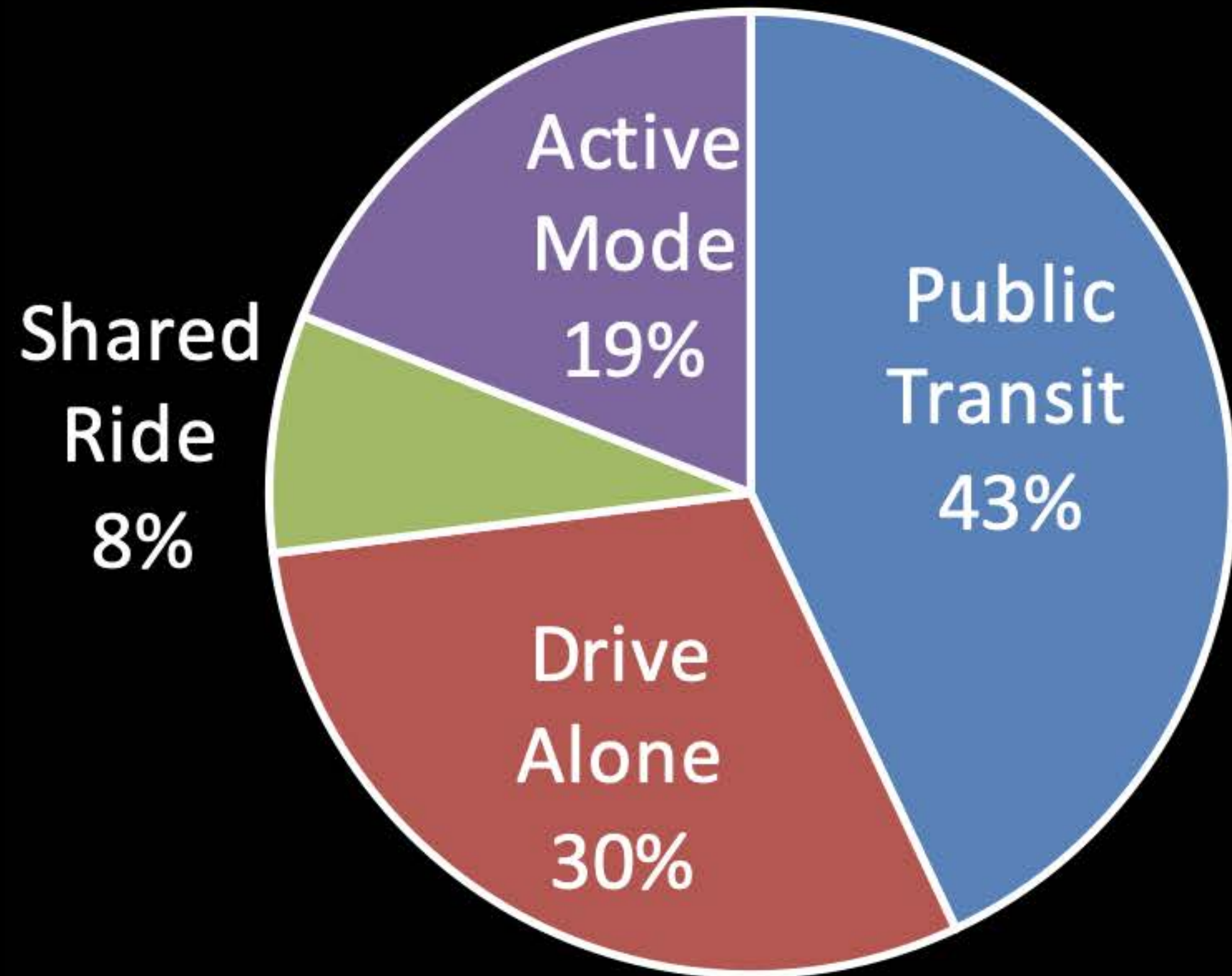
# Impacts

Parking demand: -15%

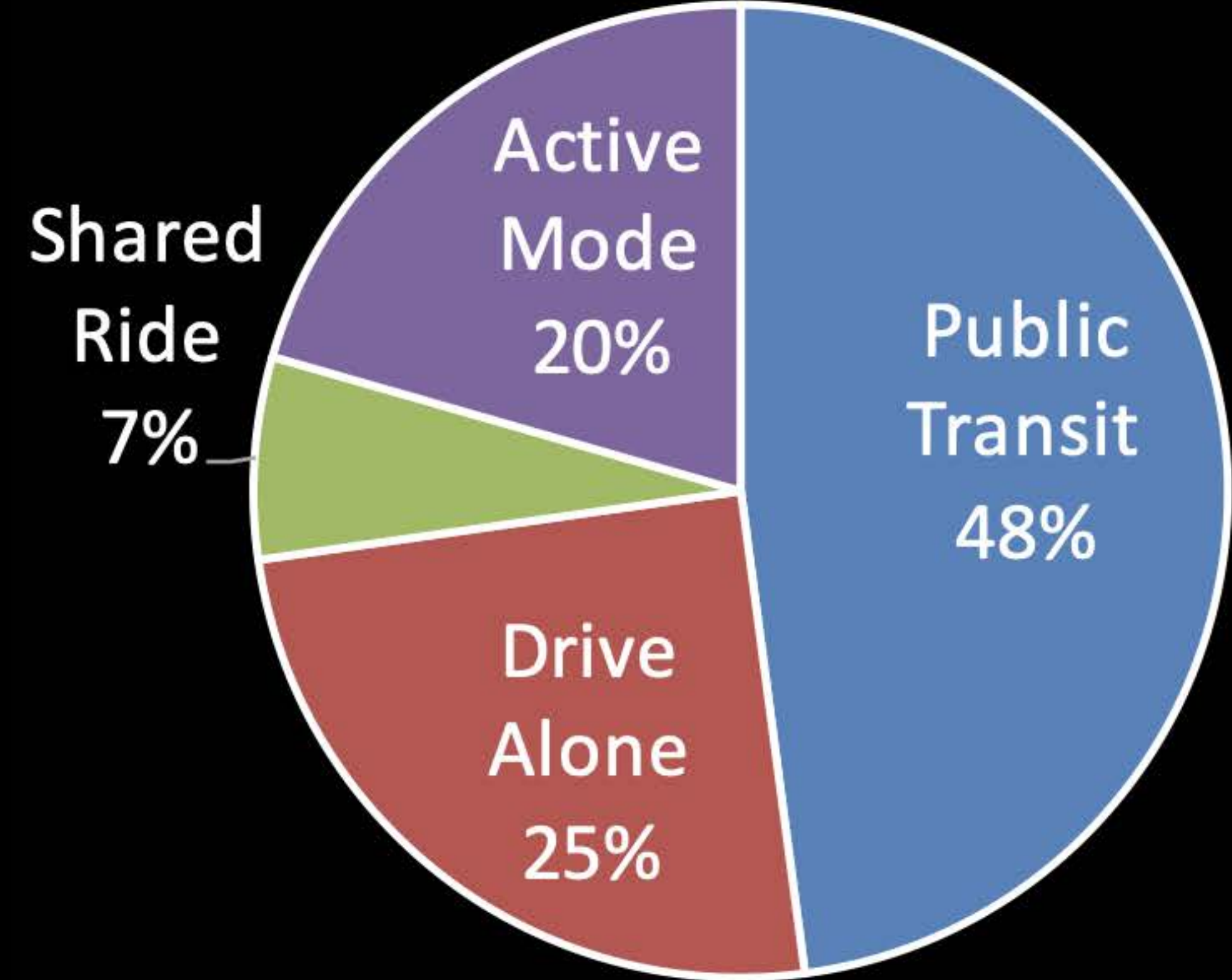


# Primary Commute Mode

Before



After





# Cost of Parking Construction

~\$125,000 per space

x 700 spaces

= \$87.5 million









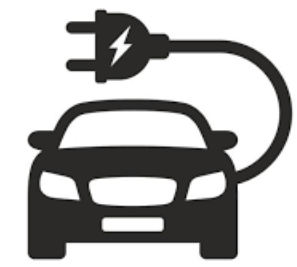


decarbonize urban transportation

MIT's contribution: beyond campus



# How do we decarbonize urban transportation?



## Electrification

The car is the dominant mode of mobility. Let's fix the car.



## Behavioral Shift

The car is the problem. Let's reduce car dependency.

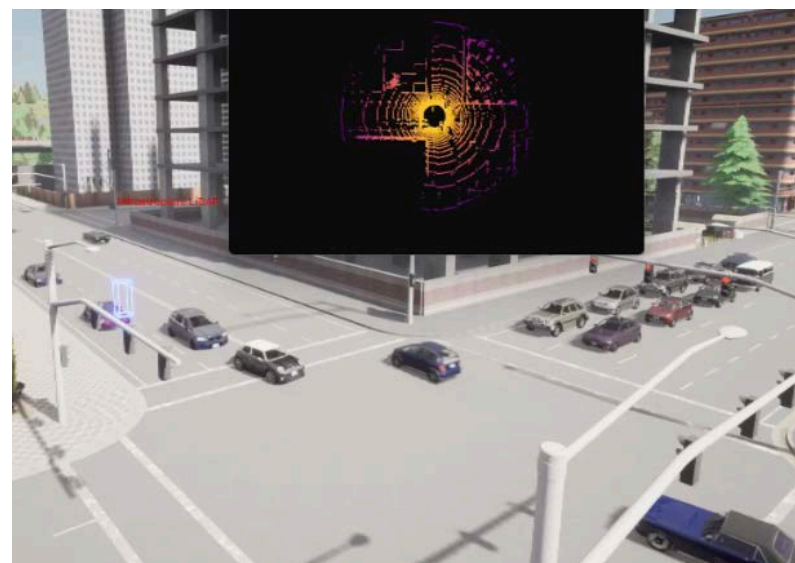


## Remote work





The MIT Mobility Initiative (MMI) is a global platform to accelerate a **safe, clean and inclusive** mobility system



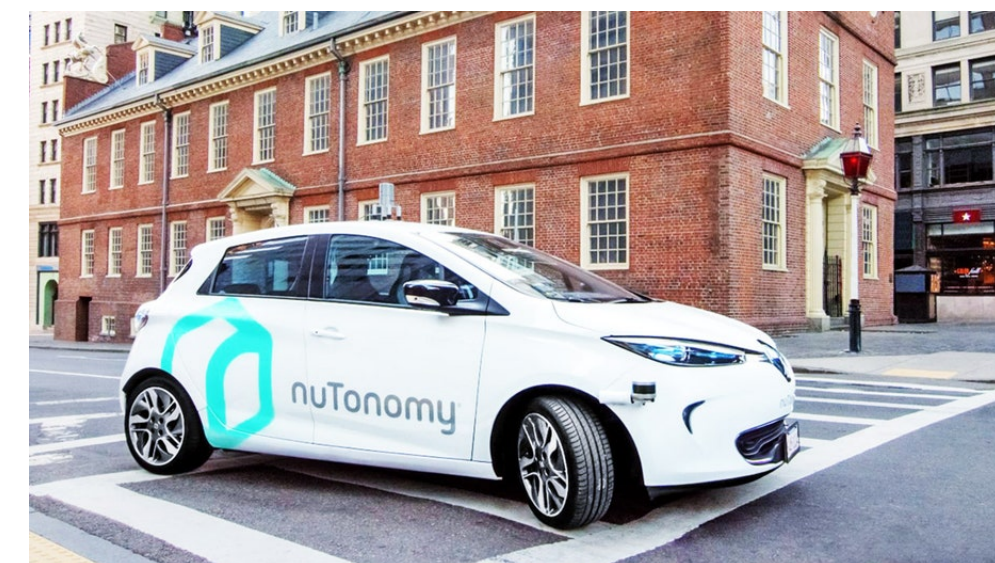
## Research

Catalyze cross-disciplinary research that provides insight to strategic challenges for industry and society



## Education

Manage and enhance MIT's transportation degree programs and expand the executive education offering



## Entrepreneurship

Leverage MIT's innovation ecosystem to spin off mobility tech startups and support existing startups



## Engagement

Foster direct interaction with leaders from business and government on the "front lines" of the mobility revolution

***Internal to MIT: moderate level of coherence***

***External to MIT***



# Decarbonizing Urban Mobility

MIT's contribution: campus and beyond

Prof. Jinhua Zhao

Massachusetts Institute of Technology



Erwin, Nicole

Attachment B

**From:** aiharding@yahoo.com  
**Sent:** Monday, March 17, 2025 2:16 PM  
**To:** Erwin, Nicole  
**Subject:** Fw: Bike lanes meeting 3/17 10am comment

----- Forwarded Message -----

**From:** "aiharding@yahoo.com" <aiharding@yahoo.com>  
**To:** "clerk@cambridgema.gov" <clerk@cambridgema.gov>  
**Cc:** "ayesha@voteayesha.com" <ayesha@voteayesha.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 17, 2025 at 09:46:49 AM EDT  
**Subject:** Bike lanes meeting 3/17 10am comment

While I support open access to roads for all commuters, I have concerns regarding the current focus on adding bike lanes and reducing road sizes for automobiles. These changes often result in decreased parking availability for both residents and businesses, as well as increased safety concerns, particularly for pedestrians.

The city has implemented traffic patterns, such as one-way streets, to help alleviate congestion. Why not apply a similar approach for bikers? For example, Hampshire Street already provides ample lanes traveling in the same direction as Broadway. It would make sense to route bikers there and preserve the current structure of Broadway. This model should be adopted throughout the city to regulate and control the traffic flows for all not just bikers. Additionally, one of my key concerns is the lack of parking spaces—where will residents and business owners park their vehicles if these changes go forward?

Aisha  
Area IV Resident