



# TRANSPORTATION & PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMITTEE

## COMMITTEE MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Tuesday, June 25, 2024

3:00 PM

Sullivan Chamber  
795 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02139

**The Transportation and Public Utilities Committee will hold a public hearing to discuss the micromobility memo prepared by Acting City Solicitor Bayer, for updates from the Community Development Department and Traffic, Parking, and Transportation on related topics and to discuss the next steps.**

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

A public meeting of the Cambridge City Council’s Transportation and Public Utilities Committee was held on Tuesday, June 25, 2024. The meeting was Called to Order at 3:00p.m. by the Chair, Councillor Pickett. 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 – Present/Remote
- Councillor Pickett – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
- Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present/Remote
- Councillor Toner – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
- Councillor Wilson – Present/Remote

**Present – 5. Quorum established.**

The Chair, Councillor Pickett offered opening remarks and noted that the Call of the meeting was to discuss the micromobility memo prepared by Acting City Solicitor Bayer, for updates from the Community Development Department and the Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department on related topics and to discuss next steps. Present at the meeting was Acting City Solicitor Megan Bayer, Assistant City Solicitor Evan Bjorklund, Assistant City Manager for the Community Development Department, Iram Farooq, PTDM Officer, Stephanie Groll, Director of Environmental and Transportation Planning, Susanne Rasmussen, and Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Commissioner, Brooke McKenna. Also present remotely was Councillor Nolan.

**The Chair, Councillor Pickett opened Public Comment.**

Clyve Lawrence, 26 Plympton Street, Cambridge, MA, shared support for e-micromobility in Cambridge.

Carissa Cesarotti, 285 Harvard Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments of support for micromobility and safety for those who use micromobility devices.

Carolyn Fuller, 12 Douglass Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments regarding pedestrian and bicyclist safety.

**During Public Comment Zoom was experiencing technical complications. The Chair, Councillor Pickett, made the decision to suspend Public Comment and resume after presentations.**

The Chair, Councillor Pickett recognized Brooke McKenna who offered a presentation titled “Micromobility Hearing”, which was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet. The presentation offered a review of micromobility, benefits of electric micromobility devices, Cambridge transportation policies and plans, addressing environmental and climate change issues, equitable and affordable transportation, road design, micromobility speeds, and legal definitions. After the presentation, City staff were available to respond to comments and questions from Councillors.

The Chair, Councillor Pickett recognized Councillor Toner who offered comments and concerns relative to shared pathways, such as Linear Park. In addition, Councillor Toner offered suggestions on ways to assist users of Linear Park when it is under construction soon. Councillor Toner shared that it is important to make it clear to micromobility users what the laws are and how they should be followed and provided examples of ways to accomplish that. Councillor Toner had questions on the use of bicycles on Route 16 and other devices using bike lanes throughout the city, which Brooke McKenna, Megan Bayer, and Evan Bjorklund were able to clarify.

The Chair, Councillor Pickett recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who had a legal question regarding enforcement relative to speeding with micromobility devices. Brooke McKenna responded by sharing that this is a discussion that would need to happen with members of the Police Department. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler offered suggestions regarding the regulation and enforcement of speed for all types of vehicles. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler asked what the process would look like to allow dockless bikes and scooter share programs in Cambridge. Susanne Rasmussen responded by providing the requirements needed for scooters to operate through a shared program and shared why it is not possible right now to allow them in Cambridge. In addition, Susanne Rasmussen provided examples of certain challenges that are faced with scooter share programs and why they are not operated in Cambridge.

The Chair, Councillor Pickett recognized Councillor Azeem who had a question for the Chair and asked if there was anything that was intended on coming out of this meeting or if it was just for discussion. Chair Pickett responded by sharing this meeting was to help get better clarity on some of the devices that are being used and to understand the regulatory framework. Chair Pickett shared that after this meeting, when everyone has more information, there could be an opportunity to work towards more specific regulations and requirements pertaining to micromobility devices. Councillor Azeem asked for clarification from Brooke McKenna regarding the use of bike paths, speed, and pedestrian safety. Brooke McKenna provided additional information, highlighting that safety is the most important factor for all users. Councillor Azeem shared his excitement as more micromobility devices are introduced and noted he looks forward to the conversation continuing.

The Chair, Councillor Pickett recognized Councillor Wilson who shared that she appreciates the conversation and the discussion on how to continue to move forward. Councillor Wilson shared that there should be more conversation around enforcement and education regarding micromobility devices to continue to reach safety goals.

The Chair, Councillor Pickett recognized Councillor Nolan who shared her excitement for the conversation and also pointed out some of the challenges and confusion that are faced with State laws and the evolution of micromobility devices. Councillor Nolan shared the importance of navigating laws and regulations as a City, but also working with the State to update laws to represent the many different devices that are being used as transportation.

The Chair, Councillor Pickett thanked the City staff for their presentation and providing information on the various issues and challenges faced by the rise of micromobility usage in the City. The Chair shared she looks forward to continuing the conversation.

**The Chair, Councillor Pickett announced at 4:26p.m. that the meeting was being recessed to work on technical complications with Zoom.**

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

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Pickett – Yes  
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes  
Councillor Toner – Yes  
Councillor Wilson – Absent

**Yes – 4, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.**

**At 4:34p.m. the Chair announced that the Committee would be coming out of recess.**

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

Councillor Azeem – Present/Remote  
Councillor Pickett – Present/In Sullivan Chamber  
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present/Remote  
Councillor Toner – Present/In Sullivan Chamber  
Councillor Wilson – Absent

**Present – 4, Absent -1. Quorum established.**

**The Chair, Councillor Pickett reopened Public Comment.**

Kevin Moses, 1 Aberdeen Avenue, Cambridge, MA, offered comments regarding ebikes and micromobility devices as well as implementing reasonable policies.

Luis Mejias, 18 Plymouth Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments relative to safety and regulations.

Peter Kuhlmann, 514 Frankling Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments regarding enforcement and regulations.

Christopher Schmidt, 25 Banks Street, Somerville, MA, shared comments on paths and safety.

Cody Scott, 56 Prince Street, Cambridge, MA, encouraged the Committee to focus on infrastructure, traffic, and safety.

Carol Lee Rawn, 59 Larchwood Drive, Cambridge, MA, shared the Council should focus on infrastructure and improving street design.

Heather Hoffman, 213 Hurley Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments on speed, and paths, pedestrian safety

Amy Flax, 86 Normandy Avenue, Cambridge, MA, commented on the importance of safety.

Charles Teague, 90 Jackson Street, Cambridge, MA, offered suggestions on how the City should move forward.

Sarah Block, Shepard Street, Cambridge, MA, highlighted how some devices are used by those in the restaurant and food industry.

**The Chair, Councillor Pickett made a motion to close public comment.**

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

Councillor Azeem – Yes  
Councillor Pickett – Yes  
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes  
Councillor Toner – Yes  
Councillor Wilson – Absent

**Yes – 4, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.**

The Chair, Councillor Pickett offered closing remarks and thanked everyone for their work and participation.

**The Chair, Councillor Pickett made a motion to adjourn the meeting.**

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

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Pickett – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Wilson – Absent

**Yes – 4, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.**

**The meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:00p.m.**

**Attachment A** – Two written communications.

**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/782?view\\_id=1&redirect=true](https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/782?view_id=1&redirect=true)

**A communication transmitted from Yi-An Huang, City Manager, relative to Awaiting Report Item Number 2024 #06, regarding micromobility rules and regulations.**

**A communication was received from Councillor Pickett, transmitting discussion topics relative to micromobility.**

**A communication was received from Councillor Pickett, transmitting a comparison chart on micromobility.**

**A communication was received from Brooke McKenna Commissioner Traffic, Parking, + Transportation Department, transmitting a presentation regarding Micro mobility.**

Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Carol Lee Rawn <clrawn@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 25, 2024 4:53 PM  
**To:** City Clerk; City Council  
**Subject:** Micromobility Regulation

I have lived in Cambridge for over 25 years and am very concerned that some on this Council appear to be pushing Cambridge to go backwards in sustainable transportation, which will inevitably have negative safety, equity and climate impacts.

In order to enhance safety for all users, the Council should be focusing on improving street and path design and infrastructure, which would be much more effective in minimizing pedestrian and e-bike/scooter conflicts than spending (publicly funded) time trying to fashion complex regulations for e-bikes and scooters. As highlighted by City experts, setting unreasonably low speed limits for e-bikes and scooters will undermine pedestrian safety by diverting e-bikes and scooters to sidewalks, and will also undermine the City's longtime and laudable goal of supporting micro mobility, which promotes transportation equity, affordable sustainable transportation, and reduces GHG emissions and air pollution. Further, as mentioned by several commenters, such speed limits are effectively unenforceable. E-cargo bikes are a key strategy to reduce dangerous truck traffic in the city, and e-bikes provide a clean, affordable and reliable means of transportation for people that are unable or do not wish to use conventional bicycles.

In order to further the Council's stated goal of pedestrian safety, it would be well advised to focus instead on design changes, such as ensuring wider multi-use paths, as well as rescind its unjustified decision to delay much needed safety infrastructure on dangerous corridors, such as Cambridge Street, which will serve to slow and contain cars and trucks, which are by far the greatest threat to pedestrians.

It is well established that micro-mobility is a critical and effective strategy for addressing climate change and ensuring a sustainable transportation system. I urge the Council to benefit from the expertise of City staff, listen to road users, and begin adopting evidence based measures such as improved design to address the pressing problem of pedestrian and cyclist safety in Cambridge. Thank you.

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Best, Carol Lee Rawn  
59 Larchwood Dr.  
Cambridge

## Erwin, Nicole

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**From:** Charles Teague <charles.d.teague@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 25, 2024 2:23 PM  
**To:** City Council  
**Cc:** City Clerk; City Manager  
**Subject:** for June 25, 2024 Transportation Committee hearing

M. Clerk, please enter this in the council record.

To the City Council Transportation Committee,  
After the recent tragedies, a hard look at the city's difficult to understand collection of webpages, regulations, and ordinances says that trivial but critical housekeeping must be done right away. Posting obsolete regulations can lead to unnecessary conflicts and, on the road, bodily harm. A three-point action plan is:

- 1.) Remove obsolete material from city's website
- 2.) Make traffic regulations simple and consistent
- 3.) Protect pedestrians from all wheeled devices, especially "e-everythings"

### **Pedestrian Safety**

First is to remove "e-everythings" from sidewalks. Anything with a motor cannot be operated in the "safe zone" of pedestrians. An **oversimplified** change is to have all operators walk "wheeled devices" on sidewalks as it won't cost any time based on existing regulations (see below). Another change is to apply the same motor vehicle restrictions on cell phone and headphone use to all "wheeled devices" users.

MGL Chapter 90 Section 1 defines "business district" identically to "thickly settled":

***"Thickly settled or business district", the territory contiguous to any way which is built up with structures devoted to business, or the territory contiguous to any way where the dwelling houses are situated at such distances as will average less than two hundred feet between them for a distance of a quarter of a mile or over.***

Cambridge regulations Section 12.7.b:

***"The operator of a bicycle shall ride at a speed no greater than an ordinary walk when on a sidewalk or when entering or leaving a sidewalk"***

Hands Free

<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXIV/Chapter90/Section13b>

Headphones

<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXIV/Chapter90/Section13>

### **Obsolete material to be removed**

The simple fix is to replace the traffic department webpage below with a link to this CDD webpage which is up-to-date and complete:

<https://www.cambridgema.gov/-/media/Files/Traffic/trafficregulations/20181231trafficregulations.pdf>

The traffic department webpage below has a link to the “April 2023 Traffic Regulations”

<https://www.cambridgema.gov/traffic/aboutus/trafficregulations>

BUT on that webpage at least Schedules 4B, O, and P link to documents dated 2014 (ten years out of date)

<https://www.cambridgema.gov/traffic/alldocuments/Documents/trafficregulations/4bnobicyclesonsidewalks>

<https://www.cambridgema.gov/traffic/alldocuments/Documents/trafficregulations/oridingonroadwaysbikelanes>

<https://www.cambridgema.gov/traffic/alldocuments/Documents/trafficregulations/pridingonroadwayscontraflowbikelanes>

### **Traffic laws to be simplified and consistent**

The municipal code states (in part) and oddly references a date from 58 years ago:

***“The traffic regulations code established by the Department of Traffic and Parking, effective August 4, 1966, is adopted and by this reference made a part of this code “***

[https://library.municode.com/ma/cambridge/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=TIT10VETR\\_CH10.04TRREAD\\_10.04.010CITRREADRE](https://library.municode.com/ma/cambridge/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT10VETR_CH10.04TRREAD_10.04.010CITRREADRE)

The municipal code states:

***“12.16.040 - Sidewalks—Riding or driving.***

***No person shall drive, ride, wheel or draw any vehicle across a sidewalk except on a driveway designed for the purpose of passage of vehicles, and no person shall use for access of any vehicle to a sidewalk any log, skid block, bricks or other articles placed in the gutter or street; provided that this section shall not apply to children's carriages or sleds containing children and drawn by hands.”***

[https://library.municode.com/ma/cambridge/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=TIT12STSIPUPL\\_CH12.16STSIUSRE\\_12.16.040SIIDDR](https://library.municode.com/ma/cambridge/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT12STSIPUPL_CH12.16STSIUSRE_12.16.040SIIDDR)

The “April 2023 Traffic Regulations” are here

<https://www.cambridgema.gov/-/media/Files/Traffic/trafficregulations/20181231trafficregulations.pdf>

and, to be confusing, it doesn't seem to align with the Municipal Code. Even worse, the regulations assign different definitions to terms the state has already defined. Since this is about moving vehicles, it is dangerous if the public can be confused so it's important that the Cambridge re-definitions be removed. Also, other definitions should match the state's (e.g. Cambridge uses “multi-use path”, the state uses “shared use path”).

The regulations also enumerate where bicycles cannot be ridden on sidewalks on:

- Pages 10 and 11
- Page 33 adds Peabody Street
- Page 33 adds Schedules O and P which are NOT shown
- Page 34 adds Schedule 4B which is NOT shown

BUT CDD has separate documents on its webpage here:

<https://www.cambridgema.gov/CDD/Transportation/GettingAroundCambridge/BikesinCambridge/RuleoftheRoad>

The CDD maps are clear and concise and should replace the above.

Charles Teague  
90 Jackson St