

TRANSPORTATION & PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Tuesday, November 21, 2023

12:30 PM

Sullivan Chamber
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

The Transportation and Public Utilities Committee will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, November 21, 2023 from 12:30p.m. – 2:30p.m. to discuss bicycle ridership and bike lane usage data.

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Burhan Azeem	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Marc C. McGovern	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Patricia Nolan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Paul F. Toner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Quinton Zondervan	<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 Tuesday, November 21, 2023. The meeting was Called to Order at 12:30p.m. by the Chair, Councillor Azeem. 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, 2nd Floor, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA and by remote participation via Zoom.

At the request of the Chair, Clerk of Committees Erwin

Councillor Azeem – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor McGovern – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor Nolan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor Toner – Absent
Councillor Zondervan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Present – 4, Absent 1. Quorum established.

The Chair, Councillor Azeem offered opening remarks and noted that the Call of the meeting was to discuss bicycle ridership and bike lane usage. Present at the meeting was Kathy Watkins, Commissioner of Public Works (DPW), Brooke McKenna, Commissioner of Traffic, Parking, and Transportation (TPT), Cara Seiderman, Transportation Planner for the Community Development Department (CDD), Elise Harmon-Freeman, Communication Manager for TPT, Scott Walker, Planning Analyst for CDD, and Tim Downing, Planning Data Intern. Mayor Siddiqui was also present. Vice Mayor Mallon and Councillor Carlone were present and joined the meeting remotely.

The Chair, Councillor Azeem recognized Cara Seiderman who gave a presentation titled “Bicycling in Cambridge Data Update”. The presentation was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet. The presentation offered an overview of the 2023 data report

that was released in October 2023, city policies and goals, the increase of bike facilities over time, new separated bike facilities, bicycle and bluebike counts in the City, and crash data.

The Chair, Councillor Azeem opened Public Comment.

John Hanratty, 15 Mt. Vernon Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments on the data report and the Cycling Safety Ordinance.

Sharon Cerny, 1798A Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA, shared their excitement for changes to design that improves bicycle and pedestrian safety on Mass Ave between Beach and Linnaean Streets.

David Shaw, 64 Linnaean Street, Cambridge, MA, shared they were grateful for protected bike lanes to make transportation on Garden Street safer.

John Pitkin, 18 Fayette Street, Cambridge, MA, thanked the Traffic Department for their report and suggested information is available on a more comprehensive and regular basis.

James Williamson, Churchill Avenue, Cambridge, MA, offered comments of concerns regarding safety improvements to bike lanes and the safety of pedestrians.

Vickey Bestor, 149 Upland Road, Cambridge, MA, offered suggestions on the City can obtain more data and suggested options for other modes of transportation for senior citizens.

Joan Pickett, Cambridge, MA, shared that she was interested in how the bike lanes are being implemented and the impact on residents and businesses.

Heather Hoffman, 213 Hurley Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments on bicycle and pedestrian safety.

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

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Toner – Absent

Councillor Zondervan – No

Yes - 3, No – 1, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

The Chair, Councillor Azeem recognized Councillor Zondervan who had clarifying questions related to the data on the report, to which City staff was available to respond. Councillor Zondervan shared that he was interested in learning more about when ebikes would be introduced into the blue bike system. Cara Seiderman shared that she was hopeful the ebike program would begin within the next few months. Councillor Zondervan noted the importance of having alternative ways of transportation for those who are unable to use bicycles.

The Chair, Councillor Azeem made a motion to suspend the rules to reopen public comment.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Toner – Absent

Councillor Zondervan – Yes

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

Chris Cassa, 103 Gore Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments regarding studies that have been done and noted the importance of making it safe for users in all areas of Cambridge.

The Chair, Councillor Azeem recognized Councillor Nolan who had clarifying questions regarding the report, to which City staff were available to respond. Councillor Nolan shared that she would be interested in seeing what the bike usage data would look like during different periods of the day. Councillor Nolan shared that she would like to see more single occupancy motor vehicles decrease with the increase of bicycle use and noted the importance in the reduction of crashes. Councillor Nolan noted that going forward, it would be nice to see more and better public transit options that could be provided by the City.

The Chair, Councillor Azeem recognized Councillor McGovern highlighted the positive effect of having safer infrastructures for bicyclist which produces more users and less crashes. Councillor McGovern offered comments on increasing the amount of bike counting infrastructures to collect more data, Brooke McKenna agreed, and Cara Seiderman shared the department is working on what the best way to collect more data with counting infrastructures would be. Councillor McGovern shared that he would like to see more shuttle services provided as an option as public transit within Cambridge to help reduce the use of single use more vehicles.

The Chair, Councillor Azeem recognized Councillor Carlone shared that he agreed with comments made by his colleagues and noted the importance of improving the safety of bicyclist and pedestrian, but also to focus on making the updates on the streets visually pleasing. Councillor Carlone shared concerns about electric vehicles using the bike lanes and noted the importance of monitoring that data as well.

The Chair, Councillor Azeem recognized Councillor McGovern who suggested the City utilizes the Mayor Summer Program participants to pass on the Road Booklet, noting that it is a great informational tool that all residents should be provided with. Cara Seiderman shared that currently the booklet is available in all City buildings, public events, and libraries.

The Chair, Councillor Azeem shared that he would be interested in comparing data on crashes with neighboring cities, especially those who are not adding as many bike lanes. Brooke McKenna shared that it is something that her department can investigate and noted that there is a statewide database that is available to look at crash numbers. Councillor Azeem shared that he would also be interested in seeing data collected on which bike routes are more heavily used,

including Garden Street. Brooke McKenna shared that her department is in the process of finalizing post evaluations for Garden Street.

The Chair, Councillor Azeem thanked everyone for attending and with no further business made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Toner – Absent

Councillor Zondervan – Yes

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

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:05p.m.

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/619?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=14bf7b26b936cb6c9a3a9f3b4905196c

A communication was received from Elise Harmon-Freeman, Communications Manager, transmitting a presentation regarding bike data updates in Cambridge.