

Meeting Summary: October 2024 Joint Meeting of Cambridge Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Transit Advisory Committees

October 16, 2024

Attendance

Bicycle Committee (9 attendees) - Did not have quorum

Present: Muna El Taha, Richard Freierman, Mark A. Boswell, Eitan Normand, Denise Haynes, Amy Flax, Scott Kilcoyne, Randy Stern, Camille Jonlin

Absent: Jerry Friedman, Alison Harris, Carola Voelker, Diane Gray, Guido Cuperus, John P. Eilersick, Michael Burke, Worth Smith, Leah Pickett, Martha Birnbaum, Ling Zeng

Pedestrian Committee (10 attendees) - Did have quorum

Present: Kevin Leckey, Jenine Turner-Trauring, Maryann Quinn, Jesus Armenta, John Leo, Alexandra Hallowell, Robin Bonner, Thomas Marsh, Janet Stein, Debby Galef

Absent: Andreas Wolfe, Melissa Miguel, Jeannine Powers, Logan Read, Sandy Goldberg, Sean Peirce, Xander Mitchell, David de Chaves, Michael McGowan, Bernhard Nickel, Evan Killion

Transit Advisory Committee (3 attendees) - Did not have quorum

Present: Arthur Strang, Melissa Zampitella, Peter Septoff

Absent: Bill McAvinney, Carl Rothenhaus, Jackson Moore-Otto, Jim Gascoigne, Katherine Rafferty, Devin Chausse, Makayla Comas, Maha Assam

City Staff

Andy Reker (CDD), Stephanie Groll (CDD), Melissa Miguel (DPW), Catiana Jean Pierre (CDD)

Others

Tara Kamal Ahmadi (MBTA) and 3 members of the public

Minutes

September Joint Meeting minutes approved.

Net Zero Transportation Presentation – Stephanie Groll, City

Stephanie Groll presented on the City's Net Zero Transportation Plan. The presentation covered the following points:

- City goal to get to net zero emissions across the city by 2050
- Wants to expand transportation options - make it easier not to use a car
- Created an Advisory Group
- Held community meetings and conversations
- Worked with consultants
- Goals
 - Remove climate pollution from transportation
 - Make moving around more accessible and equitable
 - Improved economic opportunity
 - Create a stronger community
- Plan to be released by early 2025
- 94% of all transportation emissions come from cars and trucks
- 55% of trips are under 3 miles - shifts in mode are possible
- Obviously walking and biking are most sustainable, then EV, electric bus, bus, rail etc.
- But – More people in a vehicle = fewer emissions per person, too

Members of the committees had several questions about the data presented:

- Q/A - Cambridge is not counting embodied carbon in mode assessment now...
- Q/A - Municipal vehicles are included. City has a plan to make most electric, including school buses, except the largest vehicles.
- Q/A - City council is delaying bike lanes, what is impact on emissions?

SG continued with the presentation:

- The city will need to change - more walking, biking, scooters, EVs
 - But who will be impacted, who will need to change?
- Emission reductions predicted to be reduced by 68% even if city does nothing more due to State changes, shifts to EVs in general, and technology improvements
 - But need more

Members of the committees had questions or suggestions:

- Q/A - Give E-bikes to low-income residents? Or in lieu of parking permits?
 - Communicate that Harvard shuttles are open to Cambridge Residents
- Q/A - need buses scheduled regularly and later in the evening

- Q/A - Density of bikers requires more rules to be followed by bicyclists, need education (e.g. ride the right way in bike lanes, announce when passing)
- Q/A - Road diet on Mem Drive could cut back on traffic and emissions in Cambridge
- Q/A - Need solutions for people to get home larger packages/groceries - e.g. micro zip cars for residents? Or electric cargo bikes in the BlueBikes fleet?

SG continued with the presentation.

- The city has a long list of proposed actions and suggested changes in city policies
 - Study who in city does what, to improve equity of solutions
 - Improve buses (dedicated bus lanes, bus priority etc.), walking infrastructure, bike network infrastructure and more blue bikes
 - Support community groups to increase access to bikes and scooters

Members of the committees had a number of comments:

- Q/A - too many trees blocking sidewalks on side streets
- Q/A - coordinate with neighboring communities because trips cross borders

SG continued with the presentation.

- Reduce car trips
 - Expand employer and property owner responsibility
 - Research possible mobility wallet for residents
 - Create simpler transitions between modes
 - Expand coordination with neighboring municipalities
- Accelerate switch to EVs
 - Improve charging network, including for scooters
 - Provide discounted charging rates for low-income people

Members of the committees had some additional questions:

- Q/A - E-scooter share? Docked.
- Q/A - charging stations in store parking lots

Members of the committees and city staff supporting the committees thanked Stephanie Groll for presenting on this topic.

City Project Updates

City staff then shared a number of short updates:

- Department of Public Works

- Winter construction work shut down has begun, most work ends by end of November
- Community Development Department
 - Central Sq Rezoning Block Party Sat 10/19 1-5PM, Mass Ave at Norfolk
 - Mass Ave Planning Study meeting, 10/20 6-8PM, Zoom
 - Winter Cycling Basics course, 11/13 5:45PM, Central Sq Library

Notes

Drafted RS 10/4/2024

Approved XX MM/DD/YYYY