



# TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC UTILITIES, NEIGHBORHOOD & LONG TERM PLANNING

## COMMITTEE MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Wednesday, June 18, 2025

11:00 AM

Sullivan Chamber

**The Transportation and Public Utilities Committee and The Neighborhood and Long Term Planning, Public Facilities, Arts and Celebrations Committee will hold a joint meeting to help define a study, including its focus, areas of consideration and expected outcomes to identify service gaps and potential improvements in the public transit and shuttle network in the city. This discussion will build on Awaiting Report 2025-23 dated 4.10.25.**

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Burhan Azeem	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11:05 AM
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 type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Catherine Zusy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Burhan Azeem	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11:05 AM
Patricia Nolan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sumbul Siddiqui	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote	<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 joint Transportation and Public Utilities Committee and Neighborhood and Long Term Planning, Public Facilities, Arts and Celebrations Committee was held on Wednesday, June 18, 2025. The meeting was Called to Order at 11:00 a.m. by the Co-Chair, Councillor Zusy. Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2025 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 Co-Chair, Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll of both Committees.**

**Transportation and Public Utilities Committee**

- Councillor Azeem – Absent\*
- Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present/Remote
- Councillor Toner – Absent
- Councillor Wilson – Present/Remote
- Councillor Zusy – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

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

\*Councillor Azeem was present and remote at 11:05a.m. and in the Sullivan Chamber at 11:19a.m.

**Neighborhood & Long Term Planning, Public Facilities,  
Arts & Celebrations Committee**

- Councillor Azeem – Absent\*

Councillor Nolan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber  
Councillor Siddiqui – Present/Remote  
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present/Remote  
Councillor Zusy – Present/In Sullivan Chamber  
**Present – 4, Absent – 1. Quorum established.**

\*Councillor Azeem was present and remote at 11:05a.m and in the Sullivan Chamber at 11:19a.m.

Co-Chair Zusy noted that the Call of the meeting was to hold a joint meeting to help define a study, including its focus, areas of consideration and expected outcomes to identify service gaps and potential improvements in the public transit and shuttle network in the city. Co-Chair Zusy noted that the discussion will be built on Awaiting Report 2025-23 dated April 10, 2025. Present at the meeting were Department of Transportation Commissioner, Brooke McKenna, Assistant Transportation Planner, Andrew Reker, and Sustainable Transportation Planning Intern, Marcella Cannatti. Transportation Planner, Bill Deignan was joined via Zoom.

**Co-Chair Zusy offered opening remarks and read from the following statement (not verbatim).**

Good morning,

As *Envision Cambridge* says, “Cambridge is a dense, transit-oriented City with a progressive environmental tradition and ambitious environmental planning underway.” Our goal is to enhance environmental quality for all and decrease the City’s impact on the climate and regional ecosystems.

We want to encourage green mobility choices. Not everyone can walk or bike—consider young mothers or our elderly parents and grandparents and our service workers commuting from surrounding communities—so we must have strong mass transit. The focus of this meeting is to frame a study of a municipal shuttle service that would augment the MBTA and other existing services.

We also, of course, need to continue to accommodate the needs of drivers until we have the density of housing and high level of quality transit that will lead to a significant drop in car ownership. We’re not there yet.

With that, let me introduce our presenters:

Brooke McKenna, Commissioner, Department of Transportation, and Andrew Reker, Assistant Transportation Planner.

Co-Chair Zusy recognized Andrew Reker who gave a presentation titled “Citywide Shuttle and Transit Gap Study”. The presentation was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet.

**Co-Chair Zusy opened Public Comment.**

Heather Hoffman, 213 Hurley Street, Cambridge, MA, shared concerns about the current MBTA and shuttle services offered in Cambridge and spoke in favor of other alternatives to assist people in getting around.

Co-Chair Zusy recognized Councillor Nolan who shared excitement for the ongoing conversations about improving transit in Cambridge and asked about the MBTA’s planned improvements. Andrew Reker responded by sharing that the MBTA has had setbacks in their planning due to staffing shortages, and the planned improvements should happen within a five-to-six-year timeframe. Councillor Nolan offered comments that were in favor of the City creating a city-wide shuttle system that would bring together both private and institutional shuttles, such as Harvard and MIT, into one free and easy to use system, adding that it would also reduce car dependency. Andrew Reker explained that a future study could explore a suggestion like that and provided an example of a current city-operated shuttle service in Emeryville, California. Brooke McKenna added that there are some challenges when trying to coordinate with private services because they are there to provide a specific purpose to ride users but agreed that improving the current system would only benefit the community and the city. Co-Chair Zusy agreed and stressed how important it is to analyze ridership and usage early in the study to identify what changes make the most sense.

Co-Chair Zusy recognized Councillor Azeem who stressed the importance of improving public access information about shuttle services and suggested using a platform like Google Maps to help riders. Andrew Reker shared that the EZRide shuttle is available on Google Maps and added that the ongoing construction in Kendall Square makes it challenging to provide shuttle routes because they are consistently changing with construction. Councillor Azeem spoke in strong support of coordinating shuttles and suggested reaching out to different stakeholders within the city, such as the Central Square BID, to help partner and build services that meet the needs of the community. Councillor Azeem suggested different transportation services that could potentially be used in different areas of the City, especially in areas that have less density. Councillor Azeem shared he looked forward to future conversations and plans to enhance Cambridge's overall transit system.

Co-Chair Zusy recognized Co-Chair Sobrinho-Wheeler who asked how the community engagement for the transit study would be conducted, noting that there are many diverse transit needs across the community. Co-Chair Sobrinho-Wheeler added that it would be important to include everyday trips, such as the grocery store. Andrew Reker responded by sharing how important it is to look at neighborhood related data before doing outreach, but noted that there will be thoughtful and inclusive engagement that supports the different communities. Brooke McKenna added that the city is committed to creating a full range of transit needs and will consider everyday travel in addition to work related transit as well as mobility challenges for residents. Co-Chair Zusy recognized Councillor Wilson who highlighted how important it is to have thoughtful and inclusive community engagement. Councillor Wilson noted that it is also important to educate residents on existing transportation services before expanding and bringing together systems. Councillor Wilson shared concerns about only relying on Harvard and MIT to create partnerships. Brooke McKenna shared comments related to Councillor Wilson's concerns and noted that there will be a need for the study to look at the different challenges to create collaborations with different partners. Councillor Wilson encouraged city staff to look at different community outreach approaches and suggested holding some meetings at the senior centers, so all members of the community are included. Brooke McKenna and Andrew Reker both agreed that there needs to be a strong outreach approach to reach all residents in different areas of the city. Councillor Wilson provided the suggestion of using community members in addition to consultants for outreach efforts. Andrew Reker added that the study is expected to start in August of this year and will run for twelve months.

Co-Chair Zusy recognized Councillor Nolan who asked if the consultant would handle both the community outreach and the citywide planning for a transit system. Andrew Reker explained that the consultant would be doing the planning while city staff would conduct community outreach and planning. Councillor Nolan stressed how important it is to have community members involved with the study and suggested using resources, such as MIT, who have interest in helping the city. Councillor Nolan also pointed out how there are many visitors to the city, who contribute to hotel taxes and may rely on rideshare programs if transit is not available. Councillor Nolan added that Miami Beach provides free public shuttles for visitors and a similar system in Cambridge could be beneficial.

Co-Chair Zusy stressed how important it is for Cambridge to create a flexible system that provides shuttle services, especially for seniors, to help them connect to stores, parks, senior centers, and other destinations. Co-Chair Zusy provided examples of how shuttle services can serve community needs. Co-Chair Zusy offered comments related to improvements to the MBTA service and shared it is important for residents to know what transportation options are available to them. Co-Chair Zusy shared comments, questions, and suggestions from Jim Gascoigne from EZRide. Andrew Reker shared that the City has piloted an expanded senior transportation service through a State grant in partnerships with Door2Door and the Department of Human Services and shared examples of the type of services that are provided.

Co-Chair Zusy recognized Councillor Nolan who added that the City should try to include on-demand type services in the transportation study. Councillor Nolan stressed how important it is to provide consistent and reliable services, which may encourage seniors to use them. Councillor Nolan added that more reliable transportation would also benefit local businesses because residents would have more access to travel around the city. Councillor Nolan shared that it will be important for the City Council to review the Request for Proposal before anything is finalized to provide feedback. Brooke McKenna shared that the plan is to have the City Council review the RFP to ensure that the proposal address concerns and reflects goals that have been raised in discussions.

**Co-Chair Zusy recognized Councillor Azeem who made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll of both Committees.**

**Transportation and Public Utilities Committee**

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Toner – Absent

Councillor Wilson – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

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

**Neighborhood & Long Term Planning,  
Public Facilities, Arts & Celebrations Committee**

Councillor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Siddiqui – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

**Yes – 5. Motion passed.**

**The joint committee meeting adjourned at approximately 12:14p.m.**

Attachment A – Communications 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/1045?view\\_id=1&redirect=true](https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/1045?view_id=1&redirect=true)

**A communication was received from Andrew Reker, Transit Program Manager, transmitting a presentation titled "Citywide Shuttle and Transit Gap Study".**

**That the City Manager is requested to work with relevant City departments and institutional stakeholders currently operating some form of shuttle to explore options for a municipal transit pilot program.**