

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & UNIVERSITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE



COMMITTEE MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Thursday, July 20, 2023

3:00 PM

Sullivan Chamber
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

The Economic Development and University Relations Committee will hold a public meeting on Thursday, July 20, 2023 from 3:00p.m. to 5:00p.m. to discuss the update on the Community Development Department's Economic Impact Study regarding the implementation of the Cambridge Cycling Safety Ordinance.

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Paul F. Toner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Burhan Azeem	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Alanna Mallon	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Patricia Nolan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 Economic Development and University Relations Committee was held on Thursday, July 20, 2023. The meeting was Called to Order at 3:00 p.m. by the Chair, Councillor Toner. 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 called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Absent

Vice Mayor Mallon – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Nolan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Toner – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Zondervan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Present – 4, Absent – 1. Quorum established.

The Chair, Councillor Toner offered opening remarks and noted that the call of the meeting was to hold a public meeting to discuss the update on the Community Development Department's Economic Impact Study regarding the implementation of the Cambridge Cycling Safety Ordinance. Councillor Toner shared that Iram Farooq, Assistant City Manager for the Community Development Department (CDD) was present and was joined by Pardis Safari, Director of Economic Opportunity and Development. Pardis Safari introduced Sean Peirce and Claire Roycroft from Volpe, who were joined via Zoom. The Chair noted that Mayor Siddiqui, Councillor Carlone, and Councillor McGovern joined the meeting as well.

The Chair, Councillor Toner opened Public Comment.

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Jul 20, 2023 3:00 PM (Committee Reports)

Young Kim, 17 Norris Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments on the Economic Impact Study and suggested topics for the Committee to discuss around the study.

James Williamson, Churchill Avenue, Cambridge, MA, shared similar comments made by Young Kim and offered concerns on the Volpe contract.

Sharon Cerny, 1798A Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA, offered suggestions on how the City can better reach business owners in order to take the survey.

Joan Pickett, 59 Ellery Street, Cambridge, MA, shared that the survey is an opportunity for the City to fix relationships with small business owners and to listen to their concerns.

Kelly Dolan, Upland Road, Cambridge, MA, offered concerns about the survey and Volpe and asked that small businesses get the attention that they need.

Justin DeBenedictis-Kessner, 1688 Washington Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments on the response rate to the survey and policy decisions.

Ruth Allen shared concerns about the survey and the struggles that small business owners face and asked for more outreach.

Linda Moussouris urged the City to look at North Massachusetts Avenue and the struggles small business owners are facing and the traffic impacts due to the implementation of bike and bus lanes.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Iram Farooq who, along with her team from CDD and members from Volpe, gave an overview of their presentation titled “CSO Economic Impact Study Update” which was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet. The presentation included information on the overview of the study and timeline, a background about Volpe National Transportation Systems Center, and introduction to the methodology of the study, and potential data sources overview. Within the potential data sources overview, staff reviewed the data from taxes, transactions, real estate, employment, transportation, and the business and customer surveys. At the end of the presentation, staff from CDD and Volpe were available to respond to questions and concerns from Councillors.

The Chair, Councillor Toner suggested that CDD share the link that business owners are using to conduct the survey to all the Councillors. Councillor Toner shared by doing this, it would allow Councillors to share the link in their newsletters, and other platforms, to help reach business owners and encourage them to participate in the survey.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Vice Mayor Mallon who made a motion to close public comment.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Absent

Vice Mayor Mallon – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Zondervan – No

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

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Councillor Nolan who asked how the City is reaching out to those business owners who may not be responding to the survey. Pardis Saffari shared that CDD has youth from the Mayor’s Program helping with a mixed outreach approach by assisting with door-to-door outreach and customer surveys. Councillor Nolan asked what the next steps will look like. Iram Farooq noted that CDD is waiting to get the results from the surveys to

address the impacts through the study findings. Councillor Nolan stressed the importance of looking at related studies in other areas as a tool to use as a background study moving forward.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Vice Mayor Mallon who shared that she looks forward to the full report from Volpe and that she was happy to see door-to-door outreach to engage with the businesses. The Vice Mayor asked if the City is using the Business Associations to help with outreach. Pardis Saffari shared that the Business Associations have been a big help in the process and have assisted CDD when trying to reach out to specific businesses.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Councillor McGovern who noted that it is a very complicated situation to show if the implementation of more bike lanes are reasons why small businesses have had a decrease or an increase in revenue, sharing that people will always be either for or against more bike lanes. Councillor McGovern noted the importance of using this information to create policy, but also to be realistic when looking at the results of the survey. Councillor McGovern shared that he is happy to see that there is more outreach being done.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Councillor Zondervan who shared he was in favor of the study being able to provide information to promote other transportation options while also supporting small businesses.

The Chair, Councillor Toner urged business owners to trust the City and the impact study, noting that the more data that is available from business owners, the better the study findings will be. Councillor Toner noted all the vacant storefront spaces and asked if there are tax incentives to keep a property vacant. Pardis Safari responded by noting that if the space is vacant, the property owner would have a loss on taxes which would make taxes lower. Councillor Toner asked if there was a deadline for the surveys to be submitted. Pardis Safari encouraged all business owners to submit their surveys as soon as possible but would like to have at least 20% of the surveys submitted to see results by mid-August. Councillor Toner shared that the impact study is not just about bike lanes, but seeing results on the economic health of the City. With the data from the surveys, the City can make decisions and modifications to best serve the community.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Vice Mayor Mallon, Councillor Nolan, and Councillor Zondervan who offered comments on the importance of the study and the importance of bike lanes. Vice Mayor Mallon and Councillor Zondervan stressed the importance of safety of bike lanes while Councillor Nolan and Councillor Toner expressed the need for safety, but also decisions based on data. All noted that the study will provide information on how everyone is impacted throughout the City and what changes need to be made.

The Chair, Councillor Toner recognized Vice Mayor Mallon who made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Clerk of Committees Erwin called the roll.

Councillor Azeem – Absent

Vice Mayor Mallon – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Toner – Yes

Councillor Zondervan – Yes

Yes – 4, No -0, Absent – 1. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:38p.m.

The City Clerk's Office received one written communication, Attachment A.

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/551?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=1296019411bbc730a9f91c69391c454e

A communication was received from Pardis Saffari, Director of Economic Opportunity and Development for Community Development, transmitting a draft data table.

A communication was received from Pardis Saffari, Director of Economic Opportunity and Development for Community Development, transmitting a presentation regarding the Cycling Safety Ordinance Impact Study update.

That the City Manager is requested to confer with the Economic Development division and other appropriate departments with the intention of conducting a study to collect relevant economic data relating to business impacts from bike lane installations, positive or negative, which will help inform future installations of bike lanes along commercial corridors

That the City Manager is requested to consider measures to improve the Cycling Safety Ordinance Business Impact Study. CHARTER RIGHT EXERCISED BY COUNCILLOR TONER IN COUNCIL JUNE 26, 2023

Young Kim
17 Norris Street

The Economic Impact Study (Study) was ordered by the City Council on December 6, 2021 as a result of community demand to mitigate negative impact of the Mass Ave Dudley Street to Alewife Brook Parkway Project. Unfortunately, this Policy Order was placed on file without prejudice as a result of end of legislative session. It was reintroduced and adopted as amended on February 28, 2022. Now, more than a year after the City Manager's response, (CMA 2022 #75 adopted unanimously on April 11, 2022), there are three items related to the Study for you to consider; namely the Study by Volpe Center; the Business Survey just launched by CDD and Policy Order 2023 #127 for the City Manager to consider measures to improve the Cycling Safety Ordinance Business Impact Study that Chairman Toner exercised his Charter Right to be discussed on August 7.

Based on this history, it is apparent that these items are in reverse order. When Study was first ordered in 2021, City should have immediately launched the Business Survey. Failing that, City should have included "objective data sources, collaboration with external partners, and strategies for gathering feedback and ideas from businesses" in the Request for Proposal for the Study.

I ask the Committee to ask the CDD for disclosure of this Study including but not limited to

1. Status of the contract to include
 - a. Contract number and date (Volpe Agreement No. VP140023 dated 1/10/2022 according to the response to Public Records P230599 on May 15 or the March 2023 intergovernmental agreement according to the CDD presentation in the Agenda Packet)
 - b. delivery milestone dates and performance to the schedule
 - c. deliverables received to date. Volpe should have delivered the preliminary Draft Report by July 10 according to VP140023.
 - d. cost to date
2. Reason for the business survey at this time?
3. Assessment of impact of Policy Order #127 if it is approved on August 7; Does it mean Volpe has to redo the Study according to new set of guidelines?

I would also like to ask the sponsors of Policy Order #127 revisit the Order based on the CDD's response to the above

Thank you for your consideration