

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL
TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMITTEE
Tuesday, April 28, 2026**

**TRANSPORTATION AND
PUBLIC UTILITIES
COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Vice Mayor Azeem, Co-Chair
Councillor Flaherty, Co-Chair
Councillor Nolan
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler
Councillor Zusy

A public meeting of the Cambridge City Council’s Transportation and Public Utilities Committee was held on Tuesday, April 28, 2026. The meeting was Called to Order at 3:00p.m. by the Co-Chair, Councillor Flaherty. 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, 2nd Floor, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA and by remote participation via Zoom.

At the request of the Co-Chair, Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll

Vice Mayor Azeem – Present/Remote
Councillor Flaherty – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor Nolan – Absent*
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor Zusy – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Present – 4, Absent – 1. Quorum established.

*Councillor Nolan was present in the Sullivan Chamber at 4:30p.m.

Co-Chair Flaherty offered opening remarks and noted that the Call of the meeting was to review and discuss the Residential Permit Parking Program, associated costs, and the relationship between the program, the services it provides, and the general use of the public ways in Cambridge. The hearing will also include discussion of the Policy Order passed at the March 30, 2026 City Council meeting, POR 2026-32. Present at the meeting was Commissioner for the Department of Transportation, Brooke McKenna, Assistant Commissioner for Street Management, Jeff Parenti, and Assistant Commissioner for Parking Management, Stephanie McAuliffe. Also present was Councillor McGovern. Councillor Simmons joined the meeting at 3:10p.m. and Mayor Siddiqui joined at 3:30p.m.

Co-Chair Flaherty recognized Brook McKenna and her team who gave a presentation titled “Residential Parking Permit”. The presentation was provided in advance of the meeting and included in the Agenda Packet.

Co-Chair Flaherty opened public comment.

Denise Belloste, 43 Harding Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in opposition to the proposed parking permit fee increases and the elimination of the senior parking permit exemption.

Maureen Foley, 103 Gore Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in opposition to the proposed parking permit fee increases and the elimination of the senior parking permit exemption.

Lawrence Adkins, 45 Hayes Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in opposition to the proposed parking permit fee increases and the elimination of the senior parking permit exemption.

Carl Graham, 189 Western Avenue, Cambridge, MA, spoke in opposition to the proposed parking permit fee increases and the elimination of the senior parking permit exemption.

Randy Brooks, 155 Western Avenue, Cambridge, MA, spoke in opposition to the proposed parking permit fee increases and the elimination of the senior parking permit exemption.

Valerie Bonds, 812 Memorial Drive, Cambridge, MA, spoke in opposition to the proposed parking permit fee increases and the elimination of the senior parking permit exemption.

Denise Haynes, 561 Putnam Avenue, Cambridge, MA, spoke in opposition to the proposed parking permit fee increases and the elimination of the senior parking permit exemption.

Sheila Headley Burwell, 89 Putnam Avenue, Cambridge, MA, spoke in opposition to the proposed parking permit fee increases and the elimination of the senior parking permit exemption.

Cynthia Haynes, 561 Putnam Avenue, Cambridge, MA, raised concerns about visitor parking permits and enforcement.

Michelle Malvesti, 203 Concord Turnpike, Cambridge, MA, spoke in opposition to the proposed parking permit fee increases and the elimination of the senior parking permit exemption.

Heather Hoffman, 213 Hurley Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in opposition to the proposed parking permit fee increases and the elimination of the senior parking permit exemption.

Glenna Wyman, 25 Eighth Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in opposition to the proposed parking permit fee increases and the elimination of the senior parking permit exemption.

Gary Mello, Cambridge, MA, spoke in opposition to the proposed parking permit fee increases and the elimination of the senior parking permit exemption.

Eva Kochansky, 366 Windsor Street, Cambridge, MA, spoke in opposition to the proposed parking permit fee increases and the elimination of the senior parking permit exemption.

Co-Chair Flaherty recognized Councillor Zusy who made a motion to close public comment. Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Vice Mayor Azeem – Absent

Councillor Flaherty – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Absent

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Yes – 3, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Flaherty recognized Councillor Zusy who asked if the changes to resident parking would affect the disability parking permit exemption and the process for residents who only need visitor permits and not parking stickers. Commissioner McKenna shared that it would not affect the disability exemption and that visitor permits would remain \$25. Councillor Zusy asked how many seniors currently receive parking permits and how much more revenue the City would receive if seniors were to pay the \$25 fee. Commissioner McKenna explained that the City does not track seniors and people with disabilities separately because both groups have traditionally received free parking permits. Councillor Zusy pointed out that based on the number of permits issued to seniors, increasing the fee would not generate much revenue. Councillor Zusy asked for more information related to the cost and revenue related to the permit program. Commissioner McKenna reviewed revenue estimates based on different numbers of residents choosing the \$25 reduced-fee option. She added that because the City has never offered a reduced fee before, staff estimated different possible outcomes. Councillor Zusy emphasized that although it would be a significant amount of money, it would be a small amount compared to the City's overall budget.

Co-Chair Flaherty recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who pointed out that with the changes in resident permits, residents would not have to provide proof of income or hardships to qualify for the \$25 reduced permit fee. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler added that the proposal was to help the City's subsidy for the parking permit program, not to discourage car ownership or raise more revenue. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler asked for more information on the data related to residents who have permits for three or more cars. Commissioner McKenna explained that the City does not know the permit circumstances for every household, noting that many could be multi-generational households. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler spoke in favor of limiting permits to two vehicles per person to help free up parking spaces.

Co-Chair Flaherty recognized Councillor McGovern who echoed comments made by Committee members. Councillor McGovern shared that residents with lower incomes should receive assistance regardless of their age, noting that there may be seniors who are financially stable and young adults who have lower incomes. Councillor McGovern offered comments related to the two-permit limit, adding that there may be reasons for having multiple vehicles registered under one person, such as insurance purposes. Councillor McGovern added that because the limit would be per person instead of per household, households with multiple adults could still have several vehicles. Councillor McGovern reiterated that he wanted lower-income residents to receive assistance while ensuring those who can afford to pay contribute their part. Councillor McGovern added that he was open to different approaches and thanked the public for their comments.

Co-Chair Flaherty recognized Councillor Simmons who shared that she agreed with many of the residents and seniors who oppose the proposal and that seniors should continue to receive free parking permits. Councillor Simmons spoke in opposition of residents having to identify themselves for needing a reduced fee. Councillor Simmons shared strong concerns related to the City not doing enough outreach to seniors and the community related to the potential changes.

Brooke McKenna explained that the City had not conducted outreach because the City Council had not finalized a policy decision, adding that outreach would happen once the City Council decides to proceed. Councillor Simmons asked for more information on what outreach efforts would look like. Brooke McKenna provided examples, such as mailers, online information, social media, and informational meetings, including events at senior centers. Councillor Simmons shared it would be important for outreach materials to be available in multiple languages. Councillor Simmons emphasized that seniors should be clearly informed about the proposed changes, potential costs, and all the available options before any decisions are made.

Co-Chair Flaherty recognized Councillor Zusy who thanked staff for their efforts and asked if the Department of Transportation had any alternative ideas for restricting the parking permit program. Commissioner McKenna explained that there are many ways the program can be structured, but the decision is ultimately up to the City Council. Councillor Zusy shared that she would like to introduce amendments to the proposal.

Co-Chair Flaherty had questions related to the Department of Transportation finances, such as revenue from parking violations and how the City accounts for the costs and revenues associated with the permit program. Brooke McKenna shared an approximate annual total for parking violations and shared that the Department's revenue is close to \$22 million. Brooke McKenna added that revenue from parking violations is not considered revenue from the permit program because the violations are being issued to those without permits. Commissioner McKenna provided an overview of the Department of Transportation's revenue and parking fund and shared what it supports within the Department operations. Co-Chair Flaherty asked if the Department had enough reserves to support the permit program. Commissioner McKenna shared that the parking fund has approximately \$6 million and pointed out that the balance had decreased during the Pandemic. Co-Chair Flaherty shared concerns related to the proposed fee increase and the loss of available parking spaces within the last few years.

Co-Chair Flaherty recognized Co-Chair Azeem who acknowledged the concerns that have been raised regarding affordability and noted how parking has become a very sensitive issue since the City has made changes to streets and infrastructure. Vice Mayor Azeem shared that he was not excited about increasing permit fees, but the policy had already been adopted and the City Council needed to make decisions on how to continue to move forward. Co-Chair Azeem suggested continuing the discussion during a full City Council meeting where Councillors have the opportunity to bring forward amendments and alternative approaches.

Co-Chair Flaherty recognized Councillor Nolan who thanked the Department of Transportation staff for their work. Councillor Nolan shared that she believes residents who do not own vehicles should not be responsible for subsidizing those who do. Councillor Nolan shared support for a hardship option that would be available to all residents, not just seniors. Councillor Nolan agreed with Vice Mayor Azeem that additional discussion was needed. Councillor Nolan noted the importance of outreach and that residents should understand the available options to them.

Co-Chair Flaherty recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who shared that he agreed with comments made by Councillor Nolan. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler thanked staff for their work, noting that it was a challenging and difficult issue. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler acknowledged

the frustrations residents have with parking in Cambridge. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler shared support for continuing the conversation in full City Council for possible amendments or improvements to the proposal.

Co-Chair Flaherty recognized Councillor Zusy who reviewed proposed amendments to the policy (language was shared on the screen for the public and Committee to view). Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler pointed out that because the Policy Order had already been adopted by the City Council, it could not be amended through Committee. Councillor Zusy shared she would introduce language at a full City Council meeting. Councillor McGovern and Co-Chair Flaherty shared support for the proposed language and that it should be discussed at a full City Council meeting if it is introduced.

Co-Chair Flaherty offered closing remarks and shared he would like additional information regarding the Department of Transportation staffing costs and the use of parking-related revenues before making any final decisions. Co-Chair Flaherty shared concerns about the impact of the proposed fee increase on seniors living on fixed incomes.

Co-Chair Flaherty made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Flaherty – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Yes – 5. Motion passed.

The Transportation and Public Utilities Committee meeting adjourned at approximately 4:57p.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.v3.swagit.com/videos/384195>