



# CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

Patricia Nolan  
*City Councillor*

## **Re: Cambridge Zero Emission Transportation Plan**

Dear Colleagues:

I am glad that the first ever Zero Emission Transportation Plan (ZETP), formerly known as the Net Zero Transportation Plan (NZTP), is on the agenda. Thank you to the dedicated City staff in both the Department of Transportation as well as the Sustainability Department and Community Development Department who spent many months discussing these ideas with stakeholders, experts, an advisory group, and the Health and Environment Committee. For the City Council to adopt this plan as one of our major planning documents, similar to the Net Zero Action Plan, the Zero Waste Master Plan, and the Urban Forest Master Plan, it is important that City Council goals and recent actions on this issue taken by the council since the working group finished their discussions are included in the document. Two specific additions are noted below that reflect Council priorities and goals related to long-term transportation planning.

The Health and Environment Committee met with the ZETP team on [February 24, 2025](#) to review an early [draft of the plan](#). As part of that meeting, the committee requested that the chair work with City staff to update the draft to include the comments from the meeting. After the meeting, I worked to ensure that SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timebound) goals were added, to enable better monitoring of important goals year-to-year in advance of the overall goal of net zero transportation emissions by 2050. As a result of that joint work, the updated draft plan incorporates eleven SMART goals, outlined in the final document, to track travel mode, improvements to access to public transportation and Bluebikes, and metrics for car-travel and EV adoption. These targets will allow for better oversight and tracking and will allow staff to make informed changes to strategies over time. These goals were developed through informed discussions among City staff with the ZETP advisory group, outreach to the community, the Health and Environment Committee, and through an examination of worldwide and national trends.

In addition to the goals and initiatives already within the document, this City Council has long focused on expanding bus and shuttle access citywide, through either fare free programs in conjunction with the MBTA and/or through municipal services to supplement MBTA work and

improved coordination with private shuttles. The Transportation and Public Utilities Committee and the Neighborhood and Long Term Planning Committee met on [June 18, 2025](#) to help define the scope of an ongoing Citywide Shuttle and Transit Gap Study. That study and the underlying goals should be reflected in this document under the “Buses and Shuttles” section. Under BAS-3, an additional bullet should be added: “City staff will continue to work with the City Council and private shuttle providers to explore options for a municipal transit pilot program informed by the Citywide Shuttle and Transit Gap Study.” Additionally, the BAS section should indicate efforts to expand fare free programs. The “Reducing Car Trips” section of the document indicates work on helping residents with financial support for bus/train fare (RCT-2) and work on helping with seamless fare transfers (RCT-4), but does not reference previous and ongoing work on fare-free transit options, including the [Fare-Free Bus Pilot Working Group](#), the work on the [MBTA Route 1 bus](#), and the work of the EZRide shuttle bus service. BAS-3 should add a bullet (or a section, BAS-4) to indicate ongoing work to expand fare-free transit options, such as: “Participate in State and regional discussions about expansion of fare-free transit and consider municipal subsidies to add to fare-free options for residents.”

Similarly, improving safety and access for micromobility modes has been an important transportation initiative of this Council as well as City staff. [POR 2025 #122](#) referenced some of this work including a Transportation and Public Utilities Committee meeting on [June 25, 2024](#) that sought to clarify the regulatory landscape of various micromobility options. City staff have participated in state-level planning for a changing micromobility landscape and have continued to work to clarify safety rules and expand options for micromobility options which can help reduce single-occupancy vehicle travel, especially for short trips, as well as provide alternative mobility for elderly residents and disabled residents. The ongoing work to both understand changing micromobility options and expand adoption should be referenced in this document under the “Walk, Bike and Micromobility” section. The footnote in this section underscores the importance of clear rules and guidance for micromobility devices, but the plan should be clearer about the proactive role that the City has taken to push forward these discussions at the state level. Language should be added to the introduction of the “Walk, Bike and Micromobility” section to indicate that work, such as: “City staff have participated in state-level planning for a changing micromobility landscape and will continue to work to clarify safety rules and expand options for micromobility options, which can help reduce single-occupancy vehicle travel, especially for short trips, as well as provide alternative mobility for elderly residents and disabled residents.”

Thank you to City staff, the advisory group, the community and the City Council for working to refine and improve this plan over the last several years and in working together to address climate change through a changing mobility landscape.

Sincerely,

Patricia Nolan  
Chair, Health and Environment Committee