



How do you plan to address traffic and congestion in the City of Cambridge?

The responses below are from 16 Cambridge City Council candidates, to a questionnaire circulated by the KSA to all 19 candidates in the summer of 2021.

Burhan Azeem: To meet our climate and transit goals, It's imperative that the City Council encourage transit-oriented development—housing and growth that allows more people to commute by walking, mass transit, or biking (rather than driving).

Superinclusinary near transit and major corridors are key steps. Furthermore, in a dense, walkable, and transit-connected city like Cambridge, I believe that all land-use policy is relevant for TOD. Solutions like the Affordable Housing Overlay and legalizing missing-middle housing citywide, combined with improvements in pedestrian and bike infrastructure, will make Cambridge a denser city where transit is more accessible.

Dana Bullister: Cambridge is among the most densely populated cities in the US. Investing in a variety of quality public transportation infrastructure is vital to maintaining a functional, sustainable, and accessible community. A diverse range of transit options including bus, subway, and bike networks helps spread the load of our populace, enabling Cambridge to sustainably evolve as both a vibrant and eminently livable city.

Over a quarter of Cambridge residents and workers - including myself - already rely almost exclusively on public transportation and bike infrastructure to get to work, transport family, go grocery shopping, and connect within and outside of the city. We must encourage such alternative options as much as possible to mitigate traffic and promote safety. To this end, I have pledged to work alongside Cambridge Bike Safety to implement safer bicycle infrastructure in Cambridge and to ensure the successful implementation of the Cycling Safety Ordinance.

I also believe Cambridge must accelerate bus service and prioritize bus infrastructure to accommodate its people. I support the expansion of Cambridge's dedicated bus lane network so that public transit takes priority on most roads during peak traffic hours.

A diverse range of transportation options not only controls traffic but makes accessible Cambridge's incredible resources and opportunities to those of many walks of life. Investing intelligently in these is our path toward equitable opportunity, sustainable development, safe mobility, and, ultimately, a means for the city to both adapt and thrive.

Dennis Carlone, incumbent: With 45 years in urban design including transportation design, there is no magic solution. There has always been traffic in successful economies. However, we as a city can be smarter about it but it is a slow process to implement it. Provide a greater city

and corporate supplement to public transportation including private or an expanded regional mass transit connections including along the Grand Junction railroad right of way, humanize public ways discouraging 50% of through traffic (neither starting or ending in Cambridge) from using our street network as a cut-through and focusing on walking and bicycle use of locals, have corporations and institutions build more residential options in Cambridge for its students and employees. We have to continue working together on this for the rest of our lives.

Robert Eckstut: I want to spend an ungodly amount of money on infrastructure.

I'm not sure how many of my contemporaries have lived overseas; I have. I want Cambridge to join other international developed cities that, frankly, are far superior with regard to all transportation issues. The underlying difference between Cambridge and successful transit cities is we, collectively, have chosen to abandon and under-fund public transportation. The good news is this is a fixable problem. The bad news is this won't be fixed under our current governing body.

Tonia Hicks: The efforts of Kendall Square companies to alleviate traffic congestion in Cambridge have been exemplary but there is more work to be done. I would also like to see Cambridge residents benefit from some of the programs implemented for the use of Kendall Square employees. For example, the EZ Ride Shuttle program provides free rides for employees of Cambridge-based companies—but the shuttles are generally underutilized, and service could be expanded to service more residents and more neighborhoods in the City. In addition, expanding bike lanes provides a safe and easy way for some Cambridge neighbors to get to work instead of using a car. Working with the MBTA to optimize the schedules and routing of bus service and the T could go a long way to reduce car usage in the city (longer hours during weekdays and weekends in particular). Free public transportation (buses and the T) would help to overcome residents' resistance to reducing car use and addressing commuter inequities.

Alanna Mallon, incumbent (Vice-Mayor): The housing, transportation and climate crises we are facing are inextricably linked. By not creating more transit oriented housing in urban centers, we are exacerbating the climate and transportation crisis we are in, and it will only get worse. It is imperative that we, as a region, create more housing near transit, and create safer streets for vulnerable road users to create opportunities for transportation mode shifts to more sustainable transportation options. Since being elected four years ago, I have fought to ensure Cambridge has been adding homes to meet the need, with a specific focus on affordable homes. It is also critical that we move quickly to build out a protected bike network, and that we ensure the requirements and timelines of the Cycling Safety Ordinance are met. At the same time, we need to be responsive to the needs of the community and understand that this is an evolving conversation. Two years ago, I could not have imagined that the City would consider removing the median on North Mass Ave in some places, or that many residents and small business owners think that a road diet is necessary for that stretch of roadway. Today, we are actively considering that option, and the partnership of our business community is a huge reason why. Kendall Square can continue to play an active and positive role in this conversation by advocating for and maintaining a cycling-friendly business community. Lastly, Kendall Square

can work in whatever capacity available to support the effort to make the MBTA buses free. This would lift a huge financial burden off of our low-income families and ensure that cost is not prohibitive in getting to work, to see family, or to leisure activities. Not only would ending fare collection lead to higher ridership, but it would also lead to improved service, as eliminating this step also eliminates time off the route.

[Marc McGovern](#), incumbent: I applaud the KSA for their transportation plan and advocacy. We need to work with the state to improve public transportation. The T and the commuter rail are just too unpredictable. I would also like for the city and KSA to partner to help make the T less expensive, or even free. Boston worked with the MBTA and paid to make the 28 bus free. How do we do that? How do we encourage people to take public transportation? Could we create a free shuttle service within the city? As the lead Councillor on the Bike Safety Ordinance, I am excited to see the dedicated bike lanes that are being built to make cycling safer. Getting people out of their cars is essential.

[Joe McGuirk](#): Cambridge is fortunate to be such a walkable and bikeable city. I applaud the advocacy of cyclists who are leaders in refitting our city to be safer and more green. However, as we transform our streets to safer, less congested ones, we must take into consideration all the stakeholders who share those streets. Ultimately, our goal is to have safer streets, reduce our carbon output, and reduce our traffic congestion, all while ensuring that we answer the needs of our residents and small businesses. This will require conversations that include all stakeholders. I am a proponent of reducing parking spots and creating bus lanes (for buses which should use renewable energy) along with safe cyclist lanes.

Concrete measures I espouse are zoning reform that removes the requirement for parking spots for new residential developments, and, in fact, would advocate for fees attached to creating new parking spots. I also believe that Cambridge should develop a municipal green mass transit system that would reach all our neighborhoods, which would have the benefits of reducing the need for cars and creating much needed jobs for local lower income residents.

[Patricia Nolan](#), incumbent: Traffic and congestion not only impacts quality of life, it is a key indicator that we are not meeting our climate goals for emissions. The solution to both is to continue to build, improve and incentivize our transportation infrastructure across the entire city. Even before I was a City Councilor I was advocating to invest in bike and bus lanes that foster faster and efficient travel. WE subsidize roads - why not make transit free? As City Councilor I will work on policies that encourage and reward employers who offer incentives for workers to take public transport and continue to work with the community and gain their trust that Cambridge can upgrade our infrastructure and become a less car dependent city. Biking is another way to encourage healthier habits that also help the environment. When MIT started charging for parking, driving to campus for a job decreased significantly. WE need Kendall in this effort - to encourage public transit and cycling. AND to help us develop workable creative solutions.

As people returned to work after the pandemic , we have seen a dramatic increase in the use of single occupancy vehicles - and less use of public transit. We need your help in reversing that.

WE need MORE public transit use - and from technology to ensure proper ventilation to better communication of the safety of public transit - Kendall square entities have a role and could have real impact. AS much as the city can do its part - and we try - we need more effective communication. I look to KS to help make our effort more impactful.

As a major contributor to high paying jobs in the region KS must use your influence to continue to work alongside the city and other industry leaders to advocate at the state level for better train service across the region with the MBTA and surrounding cities. I have worked to collaborate with a range of players - and I look forward to working more closely with KS if I am re-elected. We need to ensure the city, state and developer stakeholders all can work together to ensure that long term transportation infrastructure is created to effectively tie together Boston, Kendall, Alewife and the 128 corridor with 21st century transportation solutions while significantly reducing our gas emissions.

Sumbul Siddiqui, incumbent (Mayor): Traffic and congestion are critical challenges faced by our city. I have worked to ensure everyone has the ability to navigate our city efficiently and safely. To that end, I have supported policies that subsidize MBTA and commuter rail fares for low income individuals, and continually advocate for a fare free bus pilot. Our ultimate goal should be elimination of fees, because the price of a train ride shouldn't keep anyone from making it to school or work. To make buses more efficient, I also support the creation of separate bus lanes on major corridors to increase transit efficiency. This will create an incentive for commuters who currently get to work in single-rider vehicles to switch to more environmentally and traffic-friendly alternatives.

I've also supported the Cycling Safety Ordinance, which requires the City to construct permanent protected bike lanes on all streets identified for reconstruction under our Five Year Sidewalk & Street Plan. Bicycles are a strong transportation option to achieve carbon neutrality. I have worked to make cycling safer, and have hosted bicycle mechanic clinics and accessory giveaways so everyone has the opportunity to use this new bike infrastructure.

By incentivizing and investing in alternatives to single rider vehicles, we can reduce the traffic and congestion issues in our city while prioritizing safety and our climate.

E. Denise Simmons, incumbent: Cambridge is a geographically small city, and there is no reason that we cannot work - in collaboration with our partners on Beacon Hill - to not invest more in our public transportation, to make it more reliable, more economically appealing, and more convenient for people to use that for citywide travel. If we make it easier and more reliable for people to use public transportation, I truly believe more people will take advantage of that option. But we also do need to make it easier for people, particularly those in the lower and middle class, to be able to afford to live here, closer to their places of employment, as we know that many people working in Cambridge cannot afford to live here, and they're driving in each day from outside the community, in communities with more affordable housing options. That needs to be a part of the conversation. We also must be willing to look at ideas like electric scooter shares, which have had some success in other cities in getting people out of their cars and taking up less space on the streets. And lastly, we must recognize that Cambridge does not

exist in a bubble. This is a regional issue and it requires regional conversations. I am aware that our Director of Traffic, Parking, and Transportation regularly consults with his regional counterparts, which I applaud - but those conversations do not include the policy-makers, which I'd argue is a huge oversight. I am working on correcting that oversight.

Theodora Skeadas: C.A. Webb's article in the OpEd in the Boston Globe, is correct: the future of commuting is on transit. As a City Councillor, I will utilize board meetings to advocate for larger overhauls of the MBTA system that in turn will positively impact the public transportation in Cambridge.

I will lead the effort in Cambridge to strengthen the national transportation policy goals of Senator Markey and Rep. Pressley to reinforce a fare-free transit system. Additionally, proposed changes I would advocate for are expanding the hours of operation of MBTA services and better accessibility on the T for transit justice. Transportation should prioritize the service and safety of everyone in Cambridge, especially seniors, students, workers and people with disabilities. These changes would support decongesting the traffic around Kendall Square and the entire transit system.

The T system in Cambridge is only as good as the system as a whole. Therefore I will advocate for changes that will help Cambridge and the rest of Massachusetts at large. As a City Councillor, I will provide the leadership to ensure transit is accessible to all community members.

You can read my full plan for advancing transportation for the City of Cambridge here: <https://www.votetheo.com/policy-priorities/transportation>

Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler, incumbent: According to multiple recent studies, Cambridge and the Boston metro area had among the worst traffic in the country in both 2019 and 2020. That traffic has resulted in greater emissions, lower productivity, residents being delayed getting to work or doctors' appointments, and deaths of pedestrians and cyclists, which we have seen every year in Cambridge for the past several years.

Since being elected in 2019, I have pushed for more dedicated bus and bike lanes, increased sidewalk snow removal, and fare-free buses. As Chair of the Council's Transportation Committee, I introduced an updated Cycling Safety Ordinance that has become law and will create more than 20 miles of protected bike lanes in Cambridge, including on key corridors like Hampshire Street and Massachusetts Avenue where we have seen multiple cyclists deaths in the past few years. The ordinance will make it easier and safer to bike in Cambridge, which more than 80% of surveyed residents, and a majority in every age category, say they want, and it has already served as a model for other cities, including Washington, DC.

I am also working with other elected officials and advocates in the Boston area on an effort to create fare-free bus routes. Fare-free buses help improve equity because we know that bus riders are disproportionately likely to be low-income and minority residents. Additionally, fare-free buses are a way to reduce traffic and encourage residents to take public transit,

especially coming out of a pandemic that has caused ridership rates to plummet. Boston's fare-free bus pilot for the #28, as well Lawrence's fare-free service, provide examples that Cambridge can adapt here.

Bus lanes also help boost ridership by reducing commute times, especially on streets like Mt Auburn Street, where studies showed that before the bus lane was implemented there, more than 50% of commuters travelled by bus but more than 90% of the traffic was cars. Bus-priority lanes would make a huge difference for routes like the #1 bus, which has both among the highest ridership and highest delays in the whole MBTA system.

Cambridge should expand its sidewalk snow removal as another way to make it easier to walk in the city, especially for residents with disabilities or who are pushing strollers. While the City currently clears areas around parks and schools, it leaves most other sidewalks to private property owners, creating a sometimes patchwork and uneven system for snow removal. I chaired a Transportation Committee meeting about this in January of this year. Cambridge could follow the lead of cities such as Rochester and Burlington in clearing key sidewalk routes, like those between the Squares on Mass Ave, Hampshire and Prospect.

Paul Toner: I will support climate resilience through regional collaboration on housing and transportation. Cambridge and the rest of Greater Boston must address climate change through our housing and transportation policies. I believe that Cambridge should work to develop more housing stock for residents of all income levels. I will support transit-oriented development to increase density near centers of public transportation and scaling development to reflect the surrounding neighborhood. We must provide better transportation infrastructure for cyclists and incentivize alternative modes of transportation to reduce carbon emissions. However, these issues aren't unique to Cambridge and are impacted by local, regional, and state forces. We must engage other cities and towns in the region, our state legislative delegation, and organizations like the Massachusetts Area Planning Council to develop regional solutions to our housing and transportation infrastructure challenges.

Nicola Williams: Expanding public transit and reimagining public transportation in a more accessible, safer and greener way, cannot be addressed by Cambridge alone. That's why I'm committed to working with municipal leaders in neighboring cities to create a regional approach around transportation. We need to invest in our transportation to disincentivize the unnecessary use of cars. We also need more protected bike lanes while further developing our transit infrastructure to ensure accessibility and safety to those who need it. More and more options for affordable housing are being moved further away from job centers, and as a result, low income residents suffer from the large costs for transit. Developing partnerships between transit-oriented development and its users would benefit both the MTBA and nearby riders. Additionally, I support a local pilot to offer free public transportation in Cambridge including free bus transit vouchers for those in need.

I am also committed to creating policies that encourage people to use sustainable modes of transit when possible. In order to encourage communal travel, the city of Cambridge must invest in infrastructure and services that will make this goal feasible. Raising revenue for investment in

clean transportation solutions is an integral strategy to addressing this and bringing our transportation system such as the Red Line into the 21st century.

Quinton Zondervan, incumbent: The most sustainable solution is to reduce the number of cars on our streets, which will also support efforts to reduce our carbon emissions. In addition to traffic-calming measures, we need to push hard for fare-free transit on the state-level, and can establish a city-run electrified shuttle service between transit nodes in neighborhoods to help reduce traffic congestion. I've long advocated for this as a solution and plan to prioritize it if re-elected.