

Pedestrian Committee

Meeting on July 30, 2026

Note: Minutes taken by Secretary candidate. Where speaker is attributed as “CM” this stands in for Committee Member where the online note taker could not recognize who was speaking. City staff responses to questions are in italics.

Meeting Minutes

Attendees

- Members in attendance: Kaché Boyd, Kein Leckey, Kirby Burt, Mark Clancy, Sean Pierce, Gavin Colbert, Marshall Daly, Tim Dowling, Fiona Gain, Gabi Goldsmith, Peter Hsu, Russ Lyons, Amy Miao, Vinnie Rudolph, Ben Szuhaj, Jenin Turner-Trauring
- Members absent: Debby Galef, Logan Read, Shannon Hasenfratz
- City staff: Nick Schmidt (DOT), Emily Boyle (DPW), Steven Magalhaes (CPD)
- Guests: none

Minutes

Minutes from May 28:

- Motion to approve and seconded
- Minutes approved

Q&A: Meetings, announcements, and project updates

- Announcements about committee logistics:
 - Members should refrain from using the chat on Zoom and should instead engage by speaking. Chat messages by committee members are only available to panelists and are not open to the public.
 - Some members still need to be sworn in AND complete the conflict-of-interest training
- Questions about DOT Street Management division projects (answers by city staff are in italics):
 - It looks like the Cycling Safety Ordinance is close to being wrapped up. Are there plans for what comes next?
 - *For now, the department is focusing on current implementation. Timelines are extensive. Projects like Mass Ave require more than a quick build. The city recently launched a Vision Zero approach to redesigning crash-prone intersections. A Joint Meeting of Transportation Committee will be planned to discuss the plan.*
 - Broadway Section C is supposed to start in August. Will it be finished before the school year?
 - *Yes, the goal is to finish before school starts. Flex posts are on their way, and there will be more milling and repaving incoming.*

- Questions about Public Works projects & CH 90 projects (answers by city staff are in italics):
 - Do you have an update on the status or timeline of the Pit and other construction around Harvard Square?
 - *The project has a hard deadline of November. It's currently behind on schedule but the plan is still to finish in November. We are starting work on the plaza but work is continuing.*
 - City Council set money aside for a pedestrianization pilot in Harvard Sq along Brattle St. Are there updates there?
 - *That is a question for DOT, but a pedestrianization pilot began in June on Bow Street.*
 - There was about \$100k allocated for that. Is that for study, for testing location materials, planning, or application?
 - If the committee has ideas about standards or when projects get done, can we get into the details of street design? Asked about Maple St Chapter 90 projects, suggested reducing turning radiuses.
 - *It's up to committee members. We can look at projects as they are being designed, or at the final products.*
 - Inman St project: Utility work has ripped the and made it difficult to use. Are there more accessible options while work is happening? What action can we take about that?
 - *The Inman project is the water department. They try to keep one side of the sidewalk fully accessible. Depending on the timing there might be some less than suitable access. Can follow up if it feels unsafe.*
 - Could be a good alternative to add ramps or something else that's completely accessible in the meantime.
 - *Some projects do pursue that, it's dependent on the context.*

Discussion: Officer Elections

- Basic officer roles are leadership positions that keep tasks moving. Officer positions last 1 year, though member terms are 2 years. Nick will send out committee bylaws.
- Ballot format: In-person paper ballots (anonymous), virtual google form
- Chair Election
 - Vincent Rudolph: Electrical engineer. Wanted to run for chair based on leadership experience in college. Wants to make sure work gets done and can ensure the pedestrian committee stays efficient.
- Vice Chair
 - Gabi Goldsmith: Masters student at Tufts UEP. I want to learn more about city government and making walking better in Cambridge. Has ideas for extreme heat and landscaping to help pedestrian experience. Experience in student government at MIT, including experience with the banana lounge.
- Secretary
 - Fiona: Coming in virtually. Urban Planner, hoping to commit to good record keeping based on her thesis work.

- Results: All who ran uncontested WON.

Discussion: Confirming the code of conduct

- If there are too many things, it's hard for people to feel like they are living up to that. Is the idea to graze these down to a few points?
 - *This is our initial narrowing to make it easier to digest. The Transit Committee has 8 bullets, and the Bike Code of Conduct is more detailed. NS and Marcella color coded based on themes to make it more digestible.*
- Members agreed that other bullet points might cover the “Keeping the space open for everyone” idea, and suggested changing from “open” to “accessible”
- Members discussed the need for a meeting facilitator separately from the Chair positions, and Nick noted that facilitating is in the chair’s responsibilities in the bylaws
- Members merged I statements with “let members speak for themselves”
- Changed from “Find constructive differences” to “respect constructive differences”
- Members introduced “Engage in active listening” and “be kind”
- Kept “follow through on commitments”
- Motion to approve; seconded; code of conduct approved

Discussion: Responding to Healthpeak proposal

Letter writing process: Transportation committees advise City staff, with feedback being incorporated into projects. For development projects, the committee can write a letter to the Planning Board. Healthpeak will go to the Planning Board September 15.

- This is the process before the special permit. Comment letters are important for them to get approval.
- The pedestrian bridge is very central to the project. Committee support might help get the MBTA to move on the bridge.
- One members said they were in support of the project because it would be big improvement. Clean space and public access would be good.
- One member expressed concern that the dependence on commercial partners, and lack of it, might slow down development.
- A member noted that current economic conditions have discouraged residential development. Another member added that other biotech buildings haven't been able to get businesses to move in. Connections are more difficult to make when these spaces are not in Kendall/MIT.
- A member pointed out that there are lots of vacant buildings even around the T, but biotech might fill some of it in.
- One member noted that the pedestrian bridge building must occur by the time the project is 50% complete and suggested asking Healthpeak to move the pedestrian bridge earlier in the timeline.
- A member suggested consideration of what will be built before the potential stall due to economic condition. Given this, they proposed including firm timeline requests in the letter.

- Phase information detail was not included in the presentation. How much flexibility do they have in the occupants of the building?
- *Development review is difficult. Once the project is approved, it's even more difficult to change.*
- A member said that the letter should note the elevated sidewalk proposed along some buildings and distinguish between the public/private space.
- Another member noted the conflict with cars exiting the development area and suggested asking Healthpeak to deepen the partnership with the MBTA and other developments.
- Another member suggested asking about lighting and the city's management.
- A member recommended asking Healthpeak for a solid phasing timeline with years before adoption.
- Vote to write the comment letter with the Secretary's notes as a starting point.
- Motion to form a Subcommittee for the drafting of the letter. Subcommittee will include: the Chair, Cochair, Secretary, Gavin, Kaché, Russ. Motion approved.

Discussion: Call for future agenda items

- Proposed items were filled in on the slides

Discussion: August meeting

- We will hold a meeting on August 27 to review the letter. Goal is to approve a letter in time for consideration to the Planning Board.

Public comment

- New crosswalks originally proposed as part of the Massachusetts Avenue Partial Construction Project were removed from the project. Please add them back.
- Many drivers are crossing the double yellow centerline on Massachusetts Avenue between Harvard Square and Porter Square as a result of the median removal.