CITY OF CAMBRIDGE • EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Robert W. Healy, City Manager *Richard C. Rossi, Deputy City Manager*

Memo

To: Robert W. Healy, City Manager
From: Stephanie Groll, PTDM Planning Officer
Cc: Brian P. Murphy, Assistant City Manager for Community Development
Date: April 9, 2012
Re: 2011 PTDM Monitoring

This memo provides an update, as required by the Parking and Transportation Demand Management (PTDM) Ordinance, on required monitoring of projects with approved Large Project PTDM Plans. Since November 1998, any non-residential project that has created new parking has been subject to the PTDM Ordinance. The ordinance requires that a project adding parking to its facility, whose total is twenty or more spaces, prepare a plan, which is approved by the City. Plans include a commitment for a numeric reduction in the percent of people accessing the project via single occupant vehicle (SOV). Monitoring and reporting to show whether the SOV mode split commitment has been achieved is a requirement of all plans. Monitoring begins approximately one year after the new facility is occupied. For Small Project PTDM Plans with a total of five to nineteen parking spaces, a commitment to implement three transportation demand management measures is required, but there is no SOV mode-split commitment or annual monitoring.

Thirty-seven projects with PTDM approvals completed monitoring in 2012. Eleven small projects did not have monitoring requirements.

Projects Monitored

A wide variety of projects are represented among those reporting this year. They include a hospital, a theater and cultural arts facility, the retail and office portions of a mixed-used building, educational facilities, a city library, an R&D lab building and a large, multi-building office/R&D development. PTDM reports now cover the commuting activities of more than 26,594 employees and 8,540 graduate and primary school students. Fourteen of the 2010 Top 25 Cambridge Employers submitted PTDM monitoring reports. In 2011, the city monitored 16,728 parking spaces, which served 8,674,043 square feet of non-residential space.

Monitoring reliability

Response rates to 2011 employee mode split surveys were generally high. Of the thirty-seven projects conducting surveys, thirty-six had response rates of 60% or greater, with ten projects reporting response rates higher than 75%. This type of response, coupled with bi-annual driveway/parking utilization monitoring, gives us confidence that the results are reliable.

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Mode Split Results

Sixty-two percent of the monitored projects (twenty-three) met their PTDM mode split commitments for 2011. Projects meeting their mode-split commitments all showed SOV driving rates of less than those projected. Compliant mode splits ranged from a low of 0% SOV to a high of 59%.

Several factors contributed to the challenges faced by the fourteen projects that did not meet their commitments. Eleven, or almost 80%, of the projects that failed to meet their mode split commitment are located more than 1/4 mile from rapid transit. Further, almost all of the ratios of employment to parking spaces at the sites, with current employment levels, are not conducive to meeting the mode split commitments set in the approved PTDM plans. Three of these sites have space that is either unleased or under-occupied due to reductions in staffing or slower than anticipated hiring. This has led to an imbalance in the employee-to-parking space ratios. This appears to confirm national research that over-supply of parking contributes to higher SOV rates.

Projects receive monitoring response letters noting whether a project is in compliance and offering technical assistance for non-compliant projects. In some cases when a property has implemented all of its plan required TDM elements and still does not achieve desired SOV levels, we work with them to develop additional reasonable TDM measures to promote non-SOV travel. This has been a mutually cooperative process, not yet necessitating the utilization of the enforcement provisions contained within the PTDM ordinance.

In addition, six projects with special permit requirements, but no PTDM requirements*, submitted reports on the status of implementation of TDM measures and/or their mode splits. Five of these projects were required to complete mode split surveys and reported employee mode splits of between 32% and 83% SOV.

TDM Measures Implemented

A wide variety of measures have been implemented in order to meet these mode split goals. While all PTDM plans include measures to promote non-SOV travel, the ordinance allows property owners and employers some flexibility in determining which measures best fit their particular circumstances. Measures typically implemented include MBTA pass subsidies of varying levels, reserved parking for carpools, extensive bicycle parking, showers and changing facilities for walk/bike commuters, employee-paid parking, shuttles to the Red, Green, and Orange lines, as well as commuter rail. Some projects have also employed techniques such as providing financial incentives for walking and biking, combining summer picnics with transportation information fairs, offering alternative mode commuters the opportunity to park occasionally, and using car sharing to reduce the need for personal vehicles to run errands or see clients during the day.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. Thank you very much.

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* A project may have a special permit but no PTDM plan for one of three reasons: 1) It was permitted prior to November 1998; 2) It is residential or 3) It added no new parking.