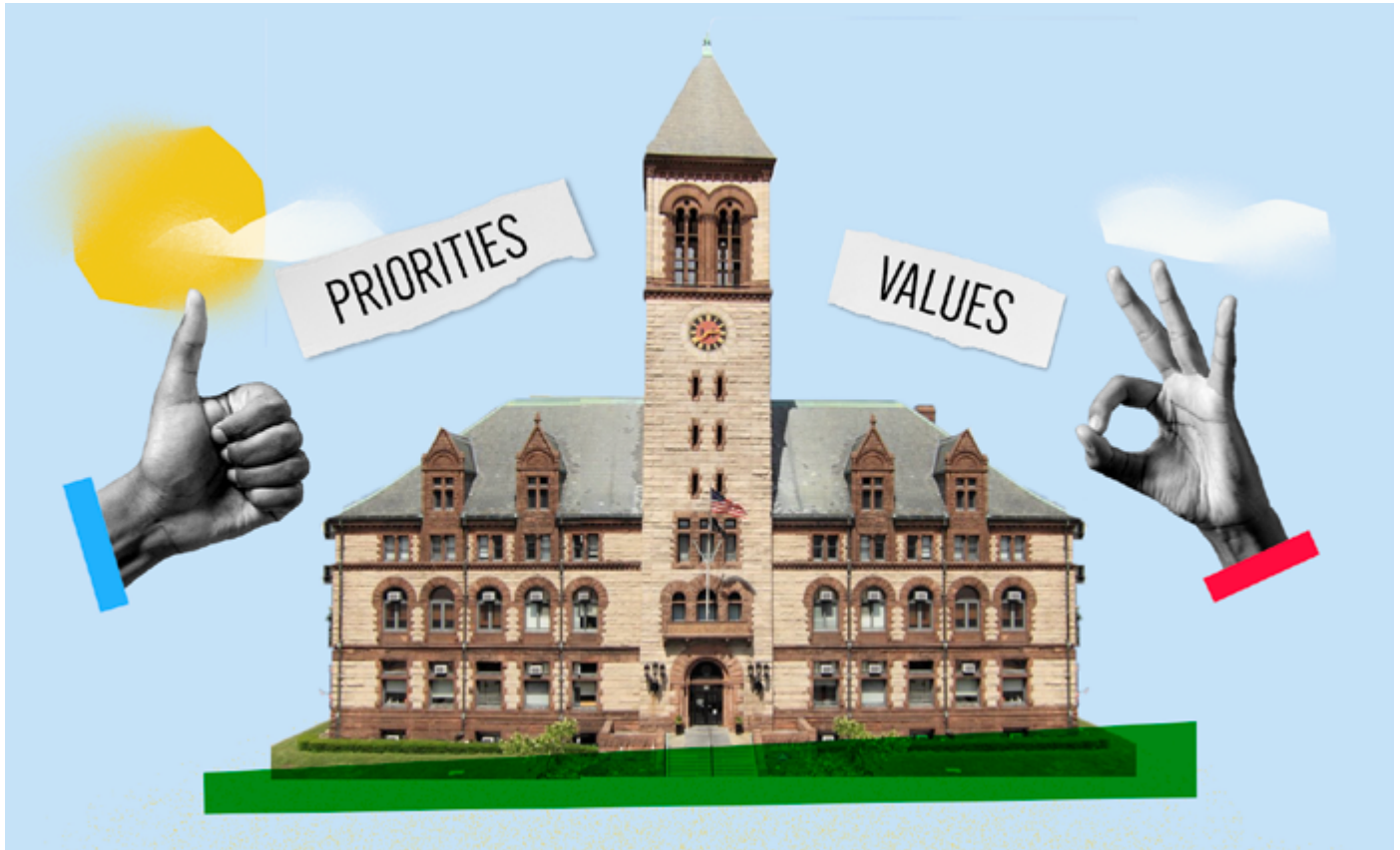




CityView Newsletter

A Publication of the City of Cambridge, Massachusetts



Learn All About Cambridge's Budget

Are you looking to better understand the City of Cambridge's new budget? This issue will provide an overview of the fiscal year 2025 budget. Learn more about the budget process and the goals driving it. Review the City's largest investments and key initiatives. See how the City is preparing for the future.

Want to read more?

Detailed budget information is available at [cambridgema.gov/budget](https://www.cambridgema.gov/budget)

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Message from the City Manager

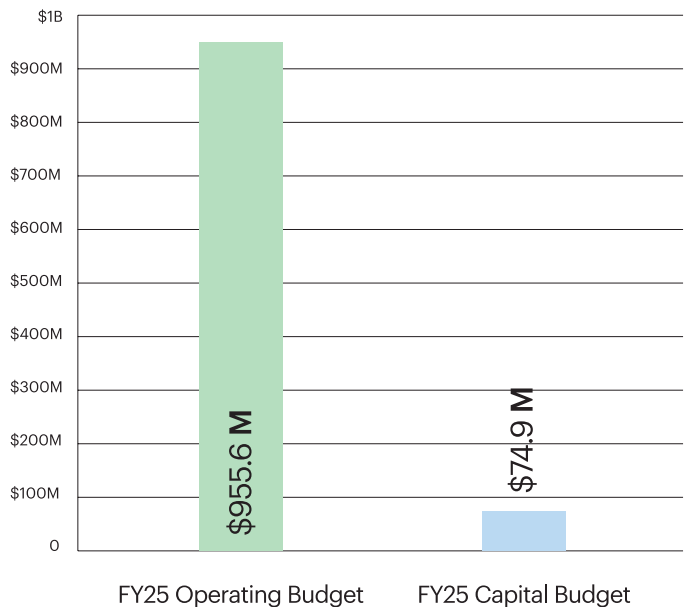
Following the recent adoption of the budget by the City Council, we wanted to ensure that the community had a better understanding of the budget, the process, the city's biggest investments, key initiatives, and what should be expected in the future. **This issue of CityView is exclusively focused on those areas and more.**

After starting the Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) budget process in fall 2023, I proudly submitted my second budget to the City Council on April 29, 2024. Having gone through the process for the first time as City Manager last year, I had a greater appreciation for the process and the dedicated city leaders, teams, and staff members who work incredibly hard every day to maintain and build a stronger, more equitable, and thriving City.

The FY25 goal was to submit a budget to the City Council that supports Council priorities and programmatic and operational needs. Several processes are used to guide the City's overall strategic planning efforts, all of which help guide budgetary decision making, and to varying degrees consist of community input, goals, objectives, and implementation strategies. Those processes include City Council goals and policy orders, finance committee hearings, the annual resident survey, and a vast array of city plans (such as the Cambridge Public Schools District Plan, Envision Cambridge, Climate Protection, Departmental Strategic Plans, Vision Zero, and more).

Building off what we started in the FY24 budget process, this year's budget process included close collaboration with Finance Committee Co-Chairs and more public hearings than prior years covering the operating budget, capital budget, police budget, and updates on federal ARPA funding. Upon the completion of that

process, the budget was formally adopted by the City Council on June 3, 2024.



How we spend our money reflects our priorities & values as a community. The FY25 Operating (\$955.6M) and Capital (\$74.9M) Budgets include significant investments in many programs & initiatives including:

Affordable housing and supporting our unhoused community

Affordable housing continues to be a top priority for the City. Once again a total of \$47 million will be allocated for this purpose in FY25. This amount has tripled over the last five years and represents one of the largest budget priorities in our annual operating budget.

The City also allocated significant funds – a total of \$16 million in FY25 – to maintain shelter capacity, homeless outreach, social services, and high intensity case management through the City Manager’s Housing Liaison Office.

Cambridge Preschool Program (CPP)

Beginning in Fall 2024, the Cambridge Preschool Program will provide access to free, high-quality programming across Cambridge Public Schools (CPS) preschools, Department of Human Services Program (DHSP) preschools, and community programs. Total FY25 funding for the program is \$34 million making this significant investment one of the largest financial investments across the City’s FY25 Budget.

Climate Resilience

The City is funding \$21 million towards Climate Resilience and another \$17 million to help address its Climate Net Zero goal. In response to the growing importance and multifaceted nature of the City’s climate initiatives, the City is introducing a new Chief Climate Officer role in FY25, who will lead the City’s new Office of Sustainability. FY25 expenditures include \$20 million in funding for open space primarily focused on preserving and revitalizing key public spaces, including the public cemetery, Danehy Park, and local parks needing repairs. Increased funding will also be allocated for Urban Forestry.

Safer Streets and Infrastructure

We continue to invest in our urban infrastructure to repair damaged roads, conduct reconstruction of streets and sidewalks, improve accessibility, address dangerous intersections, and expand protected bike lanes. Of the \$33 million in total funding that will be allocated for Vision Zero and traffic safety, \$20 million will be directed to total infrastructure projects and \$13 million to programs and planning across various City departments.

Anti-Racism, Equity and Inclusion Programs

Funding for anti-racism, equity, and inclusion programs has increased, with \$7.6 million allocated in FY25. The newly formed Office of Equity and Inclusion – a stand-alone department – has made significant investments in employee engagement, improved processes for investigating and addressing complaints, developed clearer formal policies, and established more inclusive governance over its work.



City Manager Yi-An Huang speaks at a groundbreaking ceremony for a new affordable housing development.

In order to meet these and many more important community needs, the FY25 Operating Budget increased 8% over the FY24 Adopted Budget. Our strong financial position, fiscal policies, and management practices have allowed us to continue to make major investments in the community and sustain the ability to meet current and future needs.

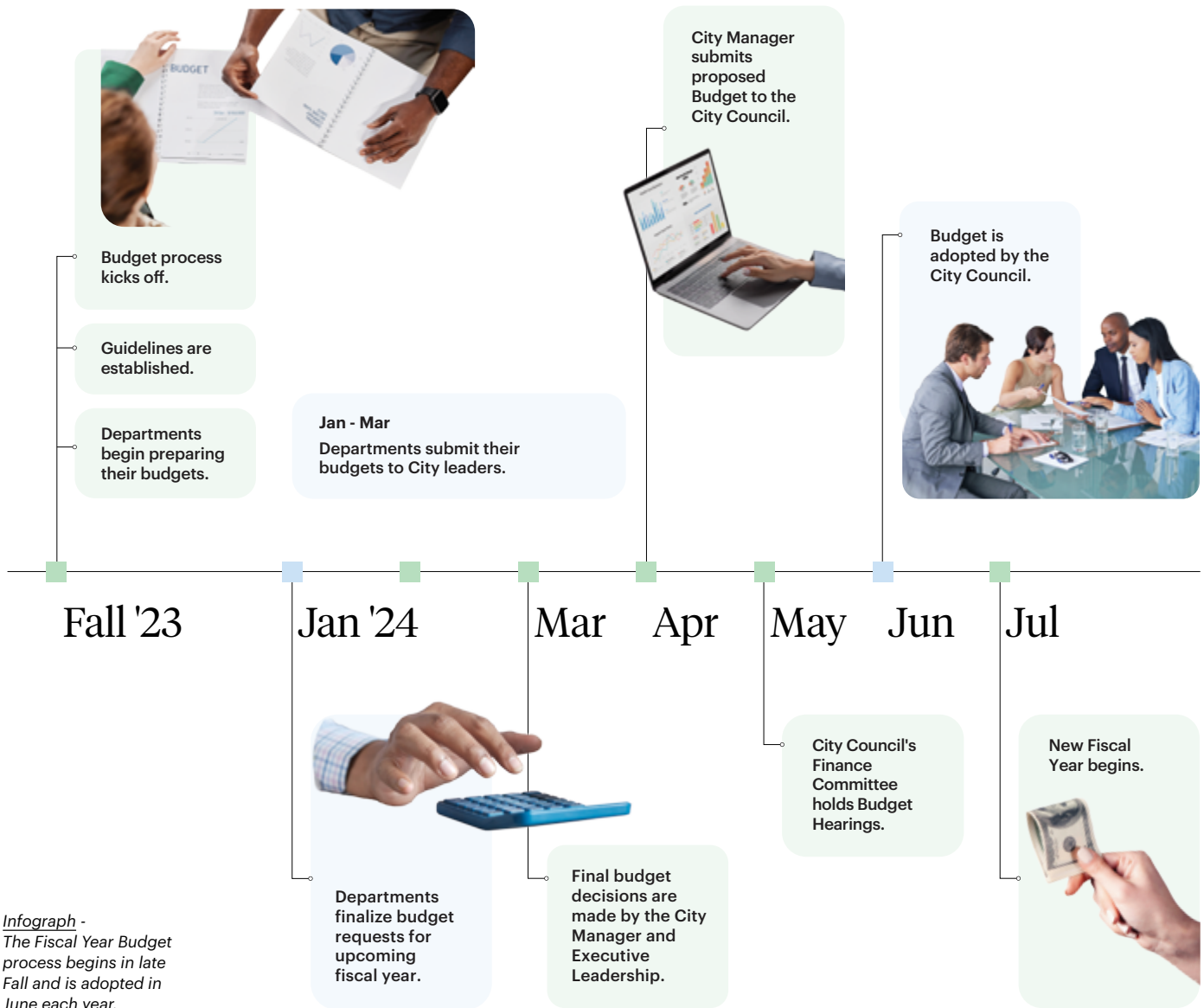
While we are optimistic about our financial outlook, we also recognize we have to remain cognizant of outside factors and trends that could impact the City’s finances.

I’m looking forward to working closely with City leadership, staff, and the City Council to ensure that we continue to build a Cambridge that works for all and acts as a leader in effective and innovative city management.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Yi-An Huang".

How the Budget Process Works

Budget Calendar



Infograph - The Fiscal Year Budget process begins in late Fall and is adopted in June each year.

The primary responsibility of the Budget Department is to prepare the annual operating and capital budgets for submission by the City Manager to the City Council as required by Chapter 44 of the Massachusetts General Laws. Each budget is an exercise in balancing City revenue collection with expenditures. The City collects revenues through activities such as taxes and permitting, and expends funds through activities such as salary payment, department operations, and capital investment.

Each fiscal year begins on July 1 and ends on June 30. For example, fiscal year 2024 (FY24) began on

July 1, 2023, and ended on June 30, 2024. In the months preceding the start of a new fiscal year, Budget Department staff meet with the City Manager and Finance Director to update the City's 5-year financial projections in order to establish general budgetary guidelines and limitations for the coming year. By state law, the budget must be submitted to the City Council within 170 days after the Council organizes in early January. The Council then facilitates a number of public hearings to finalize and adopt the budget.

City Council Updates Goals; Forms Basis for City’s Budget

In 2024, the City Council began discussions with the assistance of its consulting partner to update its goals, which are the basis for the City’s overall budget, guiding overall priorities and supporting communications about major work areas to the community. Over two public goal setting sessions, the City Council developed the following goals based upon their priorities and incorporating the results of the 2023 resident opinion survey.

Housing and Zoning

Address the housing crisis by making it easier to build more housing of all types with a focus on affordability and protections for low, middle-income, elderly, and disabled residents.

Economic Opportunity and Equity

Ensure the City of Cambridge offers economic opportunities to all residents and businesses and is taking steps toward greater economic equity, especially among our marginalized communities.

Transportation

Improve the safety, efficiency, access, and sustainability of transportation options for all, and advocate for key transit priorities with the MBTA and other state and regional partners.

Sustainability and Climate Resilience

Deepen the City of Cambridge’s commitment to addressing the climate crisis through the use of sustainable energy and strengthening climate resilience and supporting our residents and businesses through this transition.

Government and Council Performance

The City Council is committed to effective decision making through close collaboration with each other and the City administration, to communicate transparently and to deepen accountability and engagement with the community.

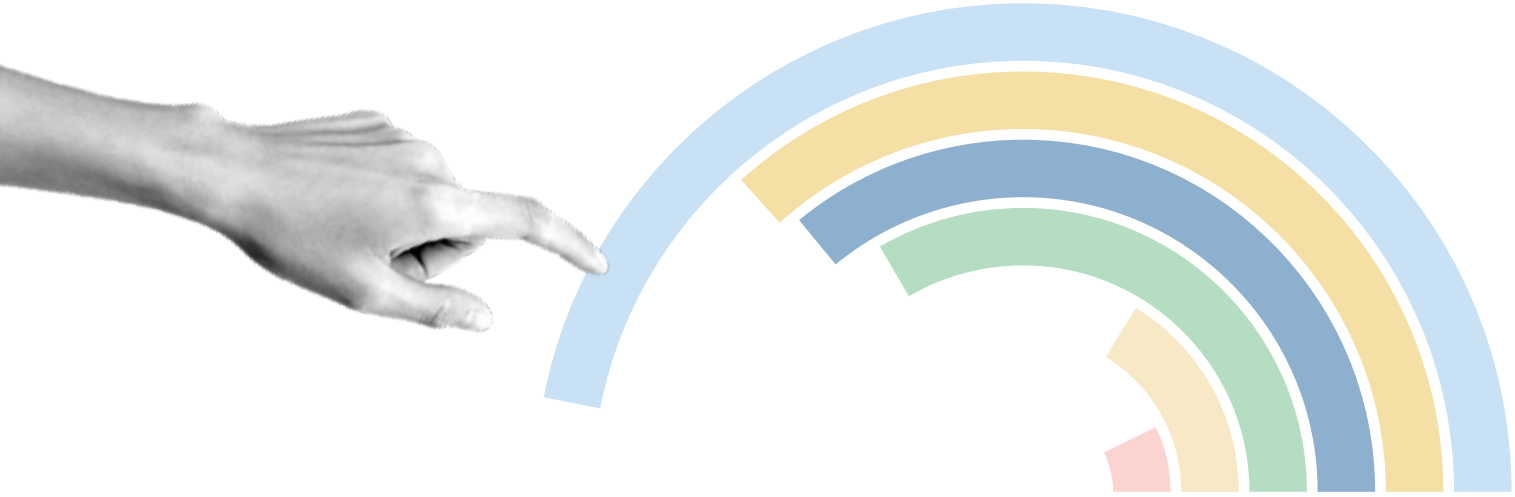
Value Statement

The Cambridge City Council is committed to developing policies that are reflective of the shared values of our community, recognizing the diversity of our city including but not limited to race, sexual orientation, language, nationality, income, age, and ability. We will conduct our deliberations with transparency, community engagement, and consideration of the financial and social implications on our residents, visitors, nonprofits, and businesses.

Members of the 2024-2025 Cambridge City Council



The Most Significant Investments in the FY25 Budget



Consolidated spending represents the total amount of expenditures across multiple departments related to specific goals. The City is committing **\$216 million** of overall funding across housing and homelessness, early childhood, sustainability, Vision Zero / traffic safety, and anti-racism, equity, and inclusion.

Note: \$216 million does not include federal ARPA funding, which the City has prioritized toward community needs. Climate Net Zero and Resilience fall under the broader category of "sustainability," which also includes open space, zero waste, and urban forestry.

- **\$46.9M**
Affordable Housing
- **\$33.2M**
Vision Zero and Traffic Safety
- **\$38.6M**
Early Childhood
- **\$15.9M**
Homelessness/Housing Stability
- **\$38M**
Climate Net Zero and Resilience
- **\$7.6M**
Anti-Racism, Equity and Inclusion Training and Programs

Local and state elected officials joined Just A Start at the start of construction for a new affordable housing development at 52 New Street.



A Deeper Look at Key City Initiatives for FY25

Environmental Initiatives

The Office of Sustainability (OOS) was created in FY25 in response to the growing importance and cross-functional nature of the City's environmental initiatives. This new structure reflects both the success of Cambridge's sustainability work in recent years, and the need for a dedicated department and staff to address the urgency and scale of the work ahead.

The OOS is one of several strategies implemented by the City to combat climate change and improve resilience.

Affordable Housing

The Housing Department, through a reorganization of the Community Development Department, will become a separate City department in FY25 to fully recognize the significant investments and growth in work related to affordable housing, as prioritized by the City Council. The Department coordinates efforts to meet the housing needs of low, moderate, and middle-income residents through initiatives that create and preserve affordable housing, especially for families with children. It also offers access to affordable housing.

The Housing Department oversees the range of the City's affordable housing programs including affordable housing development and preservation, housing planning, homeownership programs, and inclusionary rental housing.

In FY25 construction work will continue on several developments creating new affordable units. This is highlighted by the anticipated completion of the first development created under the Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO) at 116 Norfolk Street, where 62 new units for households with experience being unhoused are now under construction through a partnership with the Cambridge Housing Authority and the Department of Human Service Programs (DHSP). Housing staff will monitor construction at four sites where new housing is being built and work with affordable housing builders to move several other new developments forward in FY25. The Department will also continue to work with housing providers to assess and pursue opportunities to add to the City's stock of affordable housing. This will include acquisition of development sites where new housing will be proposed through the AHO in FY25 as well as purchase of existing buildings for conversion to affordable housing.



Early Childhood

Planning for the implementation of the Cambridge Preschool Program (CPP) has been a major effort across the City and Cambridge Public Schools, as enrollment will begin in the Fall of 2024. A long-standing goal of the City Council, CPP is a publicly funded program that is overseen by the Cambridge Office of Early Childhood (OEC) and will provide free school-day, school-year preschool to every 4-year-old and prioritized 3-year-olds living in Cambridge. Extended day and summer programs are available at an additional cost for most families.

The Cambridge Preschool Program represents one of the largest financial investments across the City's FY25 Budget. Following a robust community engagement effort by OEC, the City, and CPS, the CPP application process launched in December 2023, with nearly 1,200 Cambridge families applying within the 6-week application window. While preschool placements are

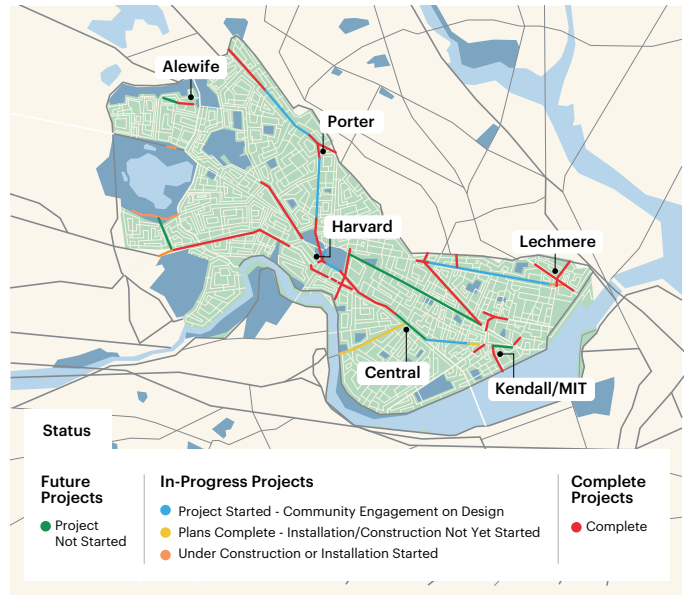
ongoing at the time of this publication, children have already been placed across 62 community preschool programs, 12 CPS preschool sites, and 7 DHSP preschool sites for the 2024-2025 school year. Approximately 40% of children enrolled in CPP’s community programs are from low-income households.

Research shows that children who participate in such a program are more prepared in early math, reading, and social and emotional development. These programs especially benefit lower-income families and have a long-term impact on the achievement gap.



Above - Additional modifications were added to the budget as a result of conversations with the City Council and recent policy orders. Those increases include after school programming.

The City looks forward to welcoming the first Cambridge preschoolers participating in CPP to their classrooms in September 2024. This major milestone will close opportunity gaps in early education and prepare Cambridge children for academic success.



Vision Zero and Traffic Safety

Vision Zero, the City’s initiative to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries, continues to guide the Department’s work to make Cambridge a safer city. As part of this initiative, the City continues to make regular investments in our Complete Streets program, which is designed to make it safe and easy for everyone to travel between work, school, shops, and other destinations, whether they choose to walk, bicycle, drive, or take public transit. Investments in our urban infrastructure include: repairing damaged roads, improving accessibility, addressing dangerous intersections, and implementing the Cycling Safety Ordinance, a City Council mandate to install a full network of separated bicycle lanes across the city.

The Cycling Safety Ordinance informs several ongoing projects, which will create floating bus stops with separated bike lanes and other pedestrian improvements, improve accessibility on sidewalks, increase plantings, and upgrade utilities. Design is underway for Massachusetts Avenue in Harvard Square between Plympton Street and Garden Street, and Massachusetts Avenue in Central Square between Sidney Street and Bigelow Street. Construction is expected to begin on Massachusetts Avenue in Harvard Square in 2024 and in Central Square by December 2025.

To date, the City has installed or has construction planned for separated bike lanes along the length of Massachusetts Avenue from Alewife Brook Parkway to Memorial Drive. Quick-build separated bike lanes have been installed on Hampshire Street from Inman Square to Broadway and Brattle Street from Sparks Street to Fresh Pond Parkway, among other locations.

Planning and outreach are underway for installations on Main Street from Massachusetts Avenue to Portland Street and Cambridge Street from Prospect Street to Second Street.

Construction on River Street continues and includes improvements on River Street between Memorial Drive and Carl Barron Plaza. Project improvements include utilities (sewer, drain and water), roadway reconstruction, new sidewalks, new pedestrian scale streetlights, new street trees, a separated bike lane, and a redesigned Carl Barron Plaza with high-quality bus shelters. Construction also continues on Huron Avenue between Fresh Pond Parkway and Aberdeen Avenue. The improvements include a porous asphalt sidewalk along Fresh Pond Reservation, additional crosswalks, and separated bike lanes.

Anti-Racism, Equity and Inclusion Training and Programs

The City has increased funding for anti-racism, equity, and inclusion programs in FY25. The newly formed Office of Equity and Inclusion has made significant investments in employee engagement, improved processes for investigating and addressing complaints, developed clearer formal policies, and established more inclusive governance over the City's work. In addition, close collaboration will occur across the senior leadership team and the Human Resources department as they seek to integrate the City's values into organizational culture and performance.

The strengthened Office of Equity and Inclusion includes the existing anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion responsibilities as well as a supervisory role for the Human Rights Commission (HRC), the Commission on Immigrant Rights and Citizenship (CIRC), the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Plus (LGBTQ+) Commission, Language Justice, the Women's Commission, and the Domestic and Gender-Based Violence Prevention Initiative.

Focused anti-racism and equity work is being led across other departments as well.

In FY25, the Community Development Department (CDD) will continue to focus on a range of efforts to better support women-and-minority-owned businesses, in collaboration with the Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) Business Advisory Committee. Based on recommendations of the 2023 disparity study related to City of Cambridge procurement of goods and services, CDD will focus on supplier diversity in FY25 and further identify ways to catalyze opportunities for minority-, women-, and veteran-owned businesses to do business, or contract, with the City. Department-wide, CDD will move forward with a focus on equity and inclusion, ensuring that all voices are respectfully heard, that diverse needs are recognized, and that benefits and amenities are broadly accessible.

Furthermore, the City has announced the Digital Navigator Pilot Program (DNP), a collaborative effort between the Information Technology Department, the Cambridge Public Library, the Cambridge Public School Department, Just A Start, and Cambridge Community Television (CCTV). This initiative is designed to support residents' digital needs. Navigators will connect residents with a wide array of social services, ensuring that both the digital and analog (nondigital) needs of families are met. A primary focus will be providing a menu of supports and services to low-income residents, including identifying and assessing individuals' digital needs, assisting residents in signing up with low-cost Internet providers, troubleshooting connectivity issues, and connecting residents to free or low-cost computers, hot spots, or related equipment. They will also help residents to set up computers, tablets, or other devices for home use, while tracking individuals' progress and types of requests and maintaining accurate and timely records.



The Most Significant Budget Modifications



The FY25 Operating Budget increased **8.1%** from the FY24 Adopted Budget. The following were among the areas that contributed to the major increases:

\$23.3M

Additional funding for the School Department

\$14.1M

Increased salaries and wages

\$12.3M

Increased debt payments

\$11M

New Cambridge Preschool Program

\$5.5M

Increases in health and pension costs

\$1M

Increased Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) costs



Other increases to the FY25 Budget were added as a result of conversations with the City Council and recent policy orders. Increased funding was allocated for after school programming, rental assistance, support for the American Freedmen Commission, and enhanced community engagement.

New Budgeted Positions



A newly budgeted Teen Librarian will be stationed at the Valente Branch and will work to create activities and programs that are developmentally enriching.

Seven new full-time positions have been added as part of the City's FY25 Budget. One of the new positions is a full-time Teen Librarian. The library serves as a welcoming space for youth and each day the library sees dozens of teen visitors who may be on their own in the evenings. The Teen Librarian will be stationed at the Valente Branch and will work to create activities and programs that are developmentally enriching. They will also work to develop relationships with teens at the Branch.

Aside from these new positions, there were several updates to City's organizational and reporting

structure in February 2024. In response to the growing importance and cross-functional nature of the City's work on housing, climate, and transportation, a Chief Climate Officer role was created in FY24 and they will lead the new Sustainability Office, encompassing environmental planning staff from CDD's Environmental and Transportation Planning Division. This reflects both the success of our sustainability work over the last years and the need for dedicated leadership to address the urgency and scale of the work ahead of us. Additionally, the Housing Division was elevated to a department recognizing the significant investments and growth in work regarding affordable housing.

Other positions include:

- **Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) Program Manager** (Finance/IT)
- **ERP Developer** (Finance/IT)
- **Special Project Manager** (Human Resources)
- **Business Process Analyst** (Human Resources)
- **Records and Archives Manager** (Clerk)
- **Custodian** (Public Works)

Cambridge Awarded Three AAA Ratings for 25th Consecutive Year

The City of Cambridge retained its distinction of being one of approximately 24 cities in the United States to earn AAA ratings from each of the nation's three major credit rating agencies in February 2024. For 25 consecutive years, the City has received these noteworthy ratings annually from Moody's Investors Service, S&P Global Ratings, and Fitch Ratings.

The favorable credit ratings that the City has consistently received play a direct role in limiting the burden placed on taxpayers in the community, by lowering the cost of borrowing funds for important capital projects.

On March 6, 2024, the City sold \$160M in General Obligation Bonds to finance capital projects such as open space and path projects, fire station headquarters, Harvard Square Kiosk surface enhancements, Central Square reconstruction, street and sidewalk reconstruction projects, municipal facilities, sewer reconstruction, and school construction and building repairs. With the City's AAA bond rating, these bonds were sold at a low, true interest cost.

In determining the City's credit rating, the rating agencies consider criteria related to the City's management, the strength of the local economy, the city's financial condition and reserves, and debt burden. The rating agencies highlighted the City's strong management and fiscal practices, financial flexibility, formal policies, budgetary stability, and healthy reserves.



Financial Outlook Focuses on Preserving Future Financial Flexibility



The City continues to recognize the importance of controlling budget growth and maintaining healthy reserves, which are vital to providing financial flexibility, promoting stability, as well as protecting the ability to respond quickly to unforeseen circumstances and unanticipated financial challenges.

Over the past fiscal year, the City has worked closely with the City Council, through the Finance Committee, to consider the FY25 Budget in the context of multi-year budget growth projections, slower growth in assessed commercial property values, increased use of reserves, and new anticipated areas of spending. These discussions provided an opportunity to help provide input on the FY25 Budget as well as to begin to create a framework for future discussions related to goals and prioritization.

Looking to the future, several potential large projects and investments may require further discussions regarding prioritization, timing, and possibly tradeoffs. The City will continue to adhere to our five-year financial and capital plan, debt and reserve policies, and the City Council goals as guides in our long-term planning to maintain stability and predictability in our budgeting process.

Local Economy At A Glance



Despite economic challenges, Cambridge's budget has grown in FY25, thanks to robust reserves and financial flexibility.

Our local economy is driven by professional and business services.

Overall, Cambridge has also made strides in employment. In the second quarter of 2023, employment totaled 151,304 jobs, 95.3% of which were in the private sector. In February 2024, Cambridge's unadjusted unemployment rate was 2.4%. This rate remains lower than those of the Boston Primary Metropolitan Statistical Area, Massachusetts, and United States. The city has also maintained a high job-to-resident ratio of 1.3 jobs for each resident.

Cambridge continues to solidify its role as national leader in the life sciences and high tech. As of 2024, over 400 firms in different aspects of the industry have headquarters or facilities in the city. Of the 20 largest biotechnology companies in the state, 16 have a major presence in Cambridge. Nine of the top 10 have their headquarters or major regional or national offices in the city: Takeda, Sanofi, Biogen, Novartis, Moderna, Bristol Myers Squibb, AbbVie, Alnylam, and Pfizer. Cambridge houses some of the top 25 employers in the high-tech industry, including Akamai, CarGurus, Google, HubSpot, and Phillips North America. Tech giants like Amazon, Apple, Facebook, and Google also have a presence in Cambridge.

Multilingual Highlights

To ensure all of our residents can stay informed, we've provided highlights of this year's budget in multiple languages.

ENGLISH

Learn All About Cambridge's Budget

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AMHARIC

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ARABIC

معرفة المزيد عن ميزانية هذا العام

هل تتطلع إلى فهم الميزانية الجديدة لمدينة كامبريدج بشكل أفضل؟ سيقدم هذه العدد نظرة عامة على ميزانية السنة المالية 2025. تعرّف على المزيد عن عملية الميزانية والأهداف التي توجهها. راجع أكبر الاستثمارات والمبادرات الرئيسية في المدينة. شاهد كيف تتحضر المدينة من أجل المستقبل.



امسح رمز الاستجابة السريعة ضوئياً للحصول على الإصدار الكامل

BANGLA

এই বছরের বাজেট সম্পর্কে আরও জানুন

আপনি কি কেমব্রিজ সিটির নতুন বাজেট আরও ভালভাবে বুঝতে চাইছেন? অর্থবছরের বাজেটের একটি সংক্ষিপ্ত বিবরণ প্রদান 2025 এই সংখ্যাটি করবে। বাজেট প্রক্রিয়া এবং যেসব লক্ষ্যমাত্রা এর চালিকাশক্তি হিসেবে কাজ করছে সে সম্পর্কে আরও জানুন। সিটির বৃহত্তম বিনিয়োগ এবং মূল উদ্যোগগুলি সম্পর্কে পড়ুন। এই সিটি আগামীর জন্য কীভাবে প্রস্তুতি নিচ্ছে তা দেখুন।



সম্পূর্ণ সংস্করণটি পেতে QR কোডটি স্ক্যান করুন



SPANISH

Lea todo sobre el presupuesto de Cambridge

¿Le gustaría conocer mejor el nuevo presupuesto del Ayuntamiento de Cambridge? En este número, le ofrecemos un resumen del presupuesto para el año fiscal 2025. Podrá obtener más información sobre el proceso presupuestario y los objetivos que lo impulsan, revisar las principales inversiones e iniciativas del Ayuntamiento y descubrir cómo nos estamos preparando para el futuro.



Escanee el código QR para acceder a la edición completa

HAITIAN CREOLE

Aprann Plis sou Bidjè Ane Sa a

Èske w ap chèche pi byen konprann nouvo bidjè vil Cambridge la? Atik sa a pral bay yon apèsi sou bidjè ane fiskal 2025 lan. Aprann plis sou pwosesis bidjè a ak objektif li pral atenn yo. Revize pi gwo envestisman vil la ak inisyativ ki pi enpòtan yo. Gade kijan vil la ap prepare pou lavni.



Eskane kòd QR pou edisyon konplè a

CHINESE

详细了解今年的预算

您是否希望更好地了解剑桥市的最新预算案? 本期将概述2025财政年度预算。详细了解预算制定流程及其驱动目标。查看本市的大规模投资和关键举措。了解市政府如何为未来做好准备。



扫描二维码可获取完整版

PORTUGUESE

Saiba mais sobre o orçamento deste ano

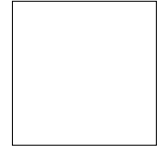
Quer entender melhor o novo orçamento da cidade de Cambridge? Esta edição fornecerá uma visão geral do orçamento para o ano fiscal de 2025. Saiba mais sobre o processo orçamental e os objetivos que o orientam. Analise os maiores investimentos e as principais iniciativas da Cidade. Veja como a cidade se está a preparar para o futuro.



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CityView



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It's easy to host

Block Parties and Play Streets

Want to make new friends and feel connected to your neighborhood?

Host a block party! It's easy to host one in Cambridge. The City of Cambridge also offers **\$300 awards** and **free Play Streets kits** for your party.

Visit www.cambridgema.gov/blockparty to apply for a **free permit**.

To apply you'll need to:

- Choose **when** (date and time) and **where** (what part of your street).
- Collect signatures from your neighbors that are in favor of the block party. **You'll need signatures from at least 25% of the households on the block** where your party will be located. A signature form is **online**.
- **Create a flyer** to promote your block party. You'll need to **submit a draft** in your application.

**CITY OF
CAMBRIDGE**

CDD
Community
Development
Department

PHD
Public
Health
Department

CA
Cambridge
Arts

PSL
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Space Lab

Have questions?

Email blockparty@cambridge.gov
or call **617.349.4721**



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