

# **CITY OF CAMBRIDGE**

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## **HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

### **CITY'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

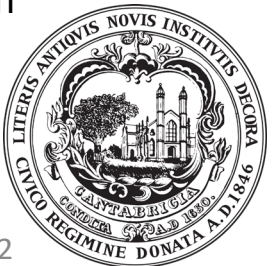
APRIL 14, 2021



# OVERVIEW – SELECT INITIATIVES

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- Activated the Mayor’s Disaster Relief Fund to support individuals, families, and small businesses experiencing financial hardship;
- Awarded grants and loans to support small businesses, including a collaboration with the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority (CRA) on a \$1 million zero-interest loan program for small businesses funded by the CRA;
- Created a Housing Stabilization Fund to support Cambridge households with six months of housing assistance, established a housing assistance line, and conducted outreach on the City’s eviction moratorium that protects tenants;
- Provided Cambridge non-profits and the local arts and culture sector with grants to provide services and meet urgent needs;
- Appointed an expert advisory committee to help guide public health measures;
- Put in place temporary construction moratorium guidelines to protect worker safety.
- Waived fees and extended payment deadlines to provide flexibility to residents, businesses, and taxpayers experiencing financial difficulties;
- Created an innovative initiative for local restaurants to supply meals for the homeless, and partnered with and funded Food for Free to create a Community Food program;
- Funded 400 Internet Essentials accounts for qualifying Cambridge School families without internet access at home;
- Supported expanded permitting of outdoor dining opportunities and funded a patio heater reimbursement program for local food establishments;
- Planned, built, and opened a temporary homeless shelter and a quarantine facility, which has evolved into a new Transition Wellness Center for over 50 unhoused residents; and
- Established a City-funded and administered daily community COVID-19 testing program, administering over 141,000 free COVID-19 tests through last week.
- Created the Cambridge Pandemic Collaborative to administer the vaccines to Cambridge residents.



# OVERVIEW – FINANCIAL SUPPORT\*

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- \$5 million in donations from Cambridge residents and corporations to the Mayor’s Disaster Relief Fund.
- \$3 million in City funds for COVID-19 related food, lodging, and shelter services.
- \$4.2 million in small business COVID-19 grants and loans through the Mayor’s Disaster Relief Fund, CARES Act, Community Development Block Grants, and Cambridge Redevelopment Authority.
- \$2 million in grants provided by the City to nonprofits for COVID-19 related services to residents.
- \$5.4 million in direct City support provided through Housing Stabilization Program, funded by CARES Act, the Mayor’s Disaster Relief Fund, and Community Preservation Act.
- \$600,000 in grants to address urgent needs in the local arts and culture sector due to the COVID-19 pandemic through a Cultural Capital Fund which is funded by Mayor’s Disaster Relief Fund and Wagner Foundation and administered by the Cambridge Community Foundation.
- \$9.3 million in additional City funds for the School Department for COVID-19 related health and safety mitigations, staff, technology, and instructional supports. The City’s fiscal team has coordinated closely with the School Department to assess financial impacts due to COVID-19, and help direct funds to ensure that the City’s schools continue to operate safely and effectively.
- City has appropriated \$10.5 million through the Coronavirus Relief Fund received as part of the Federal Cares Act to the State of Massachusetts and allocated to cities and towns. Funds have been used towards staff overtime costs related to COVID-19 testing sites and other projects; personal protective equipment; services and supports to Cambridge residents; meals for the homeless program; and activities and supports related to homeless services.

*\*Figures as of 01/31/21*



# CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC HEALTH

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## Protecting Vulnerable Populations: Testing

- Cambridge was the first city in the state to provide onsite surveillance testing to all residents in skilled nursing and assisted living facilities; over 2,700 tests were conducted (three rounds over multiple months).
- Commenced testing in elderly housing facilities in May 2020; tested over 700 residents.
- Launched mobile testing in the Port neighborhood where there were disproportionately high rates of COVID-19 infection for Black, Latinx and multiracial residents; subsequently stood up four other testing sites operating 7 days/week under the Cambridge Pandemic Collaborative.
- Launched drive-through testing site at CambridgeSide on November 1, 2020.
- Offered voluntary testing to all residents experiencing homelessness in shelters and the Warming Center as well as in the Temporary Emergency Shelter at the War Memorial.
- Have administered nearly 200,000 tests since April, 2020; average 2,500 tests per week

## Protecting Vulnerable Populations: Vaccination

- CPHD and its partners provided a total of 631 first and second doses (*Moderna*) to our unhoused community.
- Since April 9, 375 people had received at least one dose (*Moderna*) or the single-dose (*J & J*) vaccine in CHA senior/disabled housing and other low-income housing, and at the CambridgeSide clinic.
- As of April 9, a total of 91 homebound residents had received the single-dose (*J & J*) vaccine.
- CPHD and its partners administered a total of 295 vaccines at CambridgeSide on April 9 for residents of North Cambridge where there are particularly high rates of infection from COVID-19.



# CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC HEALTH

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## Protecting Vulnerable Populations: Community Outreach

- Since Fall 2020, Cambridge Community Corps (C3) members have been doing door-to-door outreach in harder hit neighborhoods and public housing buildings with high infection rates, encouraging residents to get tested.
- C3 members have since been deployed to low-income senior buildings to pre-register residents for their vaccine as well as to low-income buildings in neighborhoods hardest hit by COVID-19 infections, including 362, 364, and 402 Rindge Avenue, Washington Elms and Newtowne Court.

## Case Investigation and Contact Tracing: Stopping the Chain of Transmission of COVID-19

- When COVID-19 cases surged last April, CPHD's public health nurses recruited school nurses, retired CPHD public health nurses, and outside staff from the state's Community Tracing Collaborative (CTC) to assist with case investigation and contact tracing.
- The public health nurses and CTC staff reach out to every infected resident—also known as a case—providing them with support and guidance on how to isolate; they try to identify and connect with everyone the person was in close contact with while infectious, e.g, contact tracing.
- While CPHD nursing staff reach out to residents who test positive for COVID-19 and their contacts, there are many more individuals whose test results are negative.
- Over a dozen CPHD staff members, as well as volunteers, have participated in informing Cambridge residents of their negative test results.



# LAW

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## Law Departments' critical role in the City's COVID-19 Pandemic response efforts:

- Played critical role in ensuring that the City acted quickly and took necessary actions to respond to the COVID-19 Pandemic, protect the public health, provide emergency relief to the public, and continue to provide essential City services to residents and businesses.
- Analyzed and advised on numerous unprecedented novel legal issues, frequently requiring a very fast turnaround as the City responded to multiple emergency executive orders issued by the Governor and evolving conditions on the ground;
- Advised and supported many other City Departments and worked closely with them on navigating legal issues concerning the services and programs they provided in response to the Pandemic.
- **Emergency Public Health Orders Prepared by the Law Department:**
  - Prepared numerous emergency orders that were issued by the City Manager and the Commissioner of Public Health in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.
  - Reviewed and analyzed state and federal public health orders and guidance issued by the Governor and other state and federal agencies and analyzed the City's authority to issue public health orders in response to the City's unique circumstances.
  - Prepared many City emergency orders before the state took action, or that went further than the state to provide additional protections.



# LAW

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## Emergency Public Health Orders Prepared by the Law Department (continued):

- Specific orders included emergency orders to:
  - suspend zoning enforcement to allow take-out food at all restaurants and to allow restaurants to sell groceries;
  - provide guidance for city meetings and restrict events on City property;
  - issue and enforce a construction moratorium, later amended to require safety protocols for construction and a timeline for construction to resume;
  - issue and enforce an eviction moratorium;
  - suspend the “bring your own bag ordinance” for a period of time;
  - require masks or face coverings including restrictions greater than state requirements;
  - enforce additional restaurant requirements such as capping parties at 6 when the state increased party size to 10;
  - delay the phases of the state’s reopening plan in the City;
  - limit gathering sizes in the City beyond what is allowed by the state.

## Response to changes to federal and state laws and regulations:

- Advised City officials and staff on changes to federal and state laws and regulations under COVID-19, including the Governor’s suspension of provision of the Open Meeting Law, the Governor’s Travel and Quarantine Orders and the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act.
- Advised City staff on implementation of the phases of reopening and different requirements associated with the implementation of each phase.



# LAW

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## **City's remote workforce and Remote Meeting Policies:**

- Advised City staff on measures to allow the City's work force to transition to remote work while continuing to provide necessary services to the public via remote means.
- Prepared internal policies and agreements to allow for employees' remote work.
- Prepared policies relating to remote meetings for City Council, boards and commissions.
- Provided training and guidance on how to conduct remote meetings and suspension of the provisions of the Open Meeting Law for public bodies.

**Developed and crafted multiple Agreements for Critical City Services and Programs provided in response to the pandemic.**

**Collaborations with City Departments including preparation of agreements, providing guidance on city and state emergency orders and other requests for urgent changes in delivery of programs and services.**





# CAMBRIDGE POLICE

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## Leveraged Staffing to Meet Needs of Community

- Distributed face coverings at more than 12 sites throughout City and on patrol
- Helped distribute food at schools/various community sites
- Conducted senior phone outreach in support of testing/vaccinations
- Expanded domestic violence services when courts were closed

## Launched Multiple Emergency Sites

- Quickly identified and mobilized two Temporary Emergency Shelters for our most vulnerable populations (War Memorial and Transition Wellness Center)
- Collaborated with CFD & CPH in the opening and ongoing operations (Traffic Control) of the CambridgeSide testing site

## Minimized Staffing Disruptions

- Timely and proactive General Orders and protocols resulted in maintaining strong staffing levels throughout the pandemic.
- Initiated a thorough contract tracing program/testing program with other Cambridge public safety agencies.
- Procured and distributed frequent rounds of PPE.
- Ranked first among area police departments surveyed by the Boston Globe for highest percentage of staff vaccinated.

## Testing & Vaccinations

- Coordinated, interagency collaboration led to established testing and vaccination programs.
- Nearly 75K tests conducted citywide.
- Vaccinations provided to public safety, unhoused community, residents living in congregate shelters, senior residents, and homebound residents.
- Professional staff and Cadets also conducted senior phone outreach in support of testing/vaccinations



# CAMBRIDGE FIRE

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- Since the onset of the pandemic CFD has been on the front lines with Emergency Medical Response, Testing and Vaccines
- Beginning on March 12, 2020 worked collaboratively with PRO-EMS and Public Health Department on stabilizing a deteriorating situation in several nursing and long-term care facilities.
- Commenced testing in elderly housing facilities May 20, 2020, tested 776 residents.
- Commenced testing at Pisani Center July 18, 2020, subsequently stood up other test sites.
- Commenced Drive-Through Testing at CambridgeSide on November 1, 2020. On November 14 assisted with a drive through flu shot clinic at CambridgeSide.
- Administered over 70,000 tests and continues to average about 2500 tests per week.
- CFD Vaccination Strike Team has administered over 4500 shots since January 11, 2021.
- Have conducted mobile vaccinations for shelters, elderly housing facilities and homebound people.
- Standing up the North Cambridge vaccination site.
- The CFD has worked closely with public and private partners to provide PPE to various agencies and caretakers.
- The Fire Prevention Bureau has assisted DPW, the License Commission and the City Manager's Office in coordinating the various efforts to assist the restaurant industry in the city to facilitate outdoor dining.
- 87% of Cambridge Fire Department personnel have been vaccinated. According to a survey conducted by the Boston Globe, it is the highest percentage of vaccination in more than 25 public safety agencies.
- Cambridge Fire Department EMS Division has provided guidance and education to CFD personnel since the outbreak of the pandemic.



# EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

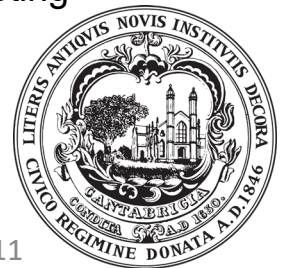
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## Department Highlights of Response to COVID-19

- Implemented department response guide to ensure critical operations and systems were maintained.
- Identified additional operational needs to support COVID-19 response for public safety.
- Implemented workforce protection protocols to safeguard essential public safety employees.
- Created COVID-19 SharePoint sites for Fire, Police and ECD to support department operations and information sharing.
- Implemented policies to support enhanced communication, minimize employee exposure, expedite contract tracing and documented return to work procedures.
- Implemented call handling and dispatch policies to support Police 12-hour shift schedule, sector car (single officer) staffing, enforcement activities, Teleserve (reports by phone) and other measures to support Fire and EMS.

## Enhanced Patient Care/Safety for First Responders

- All Emergency Telecommunication Dispatchers (ETD) transitioned to an enhanced medical triage protocol for COVID-19 symptoms utilizing the Emerging Infectious Disease Surveillance (EIDS) tool to screen 1,415 patients.
- Maintained COVID-19 positive case list in CAD to provide discreet enhanced safety protocols for first responders during emergency responses.
- Monitored calls for service trends related to the pandemic.
- Responded and dispatched units to concerns for COVID-19 social distancing violations, face covering violations and licensed establishment concerns.
- Provided support and information to residents on safeguarding them from exposure and providing information on testing availability.
- Exercised our Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) with the evacuation of the ECC by operating two sites for several hours without interruption of Fire, Police or EMS operations.
- Maintained all employee certification and facilitated additional training and wellness support for all employees.



# EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

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## Implemented Systems and Support Services that enhanced Safety and Support for Public Safety

- Activated the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) supporting Police, Fire, Public Health, DHSP, DPW and other partner agencies to support city response to COVID-19. In addition, activation ready of the Water Department EOC in the event it was needed.
- Provided 7x24 support for additional remote workers for Police, Fire and ECD and various programs for community outreach which supported Food Line Program, Mayors Disaster Relief Fund, Participatory Budget, Senior Outreach and Vaccine Information line with the deployment of wireless applications for employees to conduct offsite business communication.
- Set up IT systems and communications needs for First Responder COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic at Cambridgeside, Cambridge Public Health Flu Clinic and supported the COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force.
- Implemented and supported communication systems (radios, telephones for staff/public safety) for the operation of War Memorial Emergency Shelter.
- Implemented video conferencing for court procedures in the Police Department for emergency processes.



# PUBLIC WORKS

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## Maintained Essential Services provided throughout the pandemic:

- Trash & recycling collection.
  - Provided Trash & Recycling service every day throughout the pandemic.
  - Changed to 2 person crews
  - Increased trucks from 6 to 10
  - Disinfected trucks every day.
- Street and sewer system maintenance.
- Engineering Services.
- Buildings maintenance.
  - Developed capacity/social distancing plans for every floor of every building in the City
  - Installed & maintained 200 hand sanitizing stations throughout city buildings
  - installed approx. 300 plexiglass guards throughout city buildings
  - Installed approx. 1000 air purifiers in municipal buildings
  - Disinfected every building at least once per week for the past 60 weeks.
- Parks maintenance.
- Cemetery services.
- Forestry services.
- Snow management.
  - Reorganized crews and contractors to ensure safe operations
  - 45 inches of snow – 4 plowing events & 18 salting events.



# PUBLIC WORKS

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## **Assisted unhoused community:**

- Managed construction of War Memorial shelter.
- Managed construction of Transition Wellness shelter.
- Established temporary shower facilities in Harvard Square.
- Established 8 temporary toilets and 6 handwashing facilities throughout the city. The temporary toilets have been cleaned and disinfected 4 times per day 7 days a week throughout the pandemic..
- Installed Public Sharps Containers in Central Square working with the BID.

## **Assisted business community:**

- Facilitated Year-round outdoor dining.
- Provided jersey barriers to ensure safe enclosures associated with outdoor dining.
- eliminated DPW fees associated with outdoor dining.
- Facilitated alternative traffic management solutions to assist with outdoor dining.
- Provided plexiglass barriers to over 200 businesses.
- Approx. 6,000 COVID advisory signs distributed to businesses and others throughout the community.



# INSPECTIONAL SERVICES

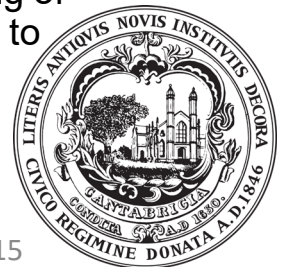
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## Building Department

- Initial construction moratorium implementation was effective, building inspectors were out in neighborhoods enforcing ordinance and also able to be flexible for keeping active projects moving forward by doing remote inspections as needed.
- Over 950 initial Covid building permit applications. Since July another 1,000 applications once incorporated in Building Permit system.

## Housing/Sanitary

- Inspectors worked directly with the Public Health Department and DPW providing guidance and supplies, including delivering over 3,000 thousand masks, in addition to Covid compliance signage related to face covering mandates and social distancing, to all essential food establishments that were allowed to be open.
- Inspectors worked with grocery store managers and other food establishments on signage, occupancy levels, and health and safety protocols as well as mitigating responses to positive Covid cases with staff.
- Inspectors worked with residential apartment complexes and multifamily buildings to provide signage and guidance for common shared areas and advise on safe occupancy levels for spaces such as, front entrances, laundry rooms etc.
- As phases progressed, restaurants were allowed to sell groceries. Inspectors worked with owners to verify they were positioned to do so and ensure that not only Covid protocols were being followed but, that all food safety protocols were followed to guarantee the public's safety.
- As indoor dining became available, Inspectors continued to offer assistance to restaurants with preliminary inspections, as many had been closed for an extended time. This included, safety guidelines, signage, routine inspections and tracking of guests for contract tracing. Inspectors also worked nights and weekends to be available for restaurant business hours to spot check on occupancy levels and to verify protocols being followed.
- Inspectors also worked with Public Health and restaurants to provide guidance for establishments if staff contracted Covid. This included closing, testing and reopening guidelines.



# INSPECTIONAL SERVICES

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## Housing/Sanitary

- Our staff visited restaurants, grocery stores, multifamily units, and apartment complexes throughout the pandemic to establish a presence and communications for residents and employees to request supplies and report concerns.
- Inspectors also took on new responsibilities in making sure other businesses were compliant or respond to complaints, provide help and guidance which included Gym's, Hair Salons, Nail Salons, Places of Worship and Office Spaces.
- Throughout the pandemic, ISD received a significant increase in concerns related to mask compliance, adherence with safety protocols such as social distancing in shared spaces in multi units building, etc. ISD continues to respond to all COVID complaints and conduct COVID compliance inspections as well as food safety and habitability inspections in housing establishments and food establishments.





# **TRAFFIC, PARKING, & TRANSPORTATION**

## **Expanded online customer service and community engagement**

- Reworked resident permit renewals to address COVID-19 restrictions and provide flexibility for residents:
  - Extended validity of resident permits for both 2019 and 2020 to allow additional time for residents to renew their permits.
  - Created new online tools to reduce the number of customers who must come to our office.
  - Added appointment system for remaining customers who must come to our office.
- Absorbed fees for credit card transactions.
- Shifted community engagement to create new opportunities for participation, including focusing on virtual platforms, while also making information available through posters on the street and being available by phone to those who do not have access to the internet.

## **Worked with local businesses and business associations to convert public spaces for uses that better served community needs**

- Starlight Square/Central Square Farmer's Market.
- Inman Square one-way conversion.
- Customer pick up zones for restaurants and other businesses (48 15-minute pick-up spaces).
- Outdoor dining for restaurants (196 parking spaces, including Starlight)

## **Supported our employees during multiple transitions in building/Department operations**

- Transitioned staff to remote work (as feasible), in coordination with the IT Department and other key departments.
- Supported staff during building closures and expanded/enhanced remote work opportunities.
- Prepared workspaces for building reopening and resuming Department operations, including resident permit renewals (2X), enforcement, and street occupancy permits.
- Provided engineering and operations support, including beginning implementation of Cycling Safety Ordinance.



# LICENSE COMMISSION

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## Department Operations

- Never ceased
- Green Department – all business already conducted online
- Customer service provided during City’s regular business hours and beyond
- Shred Day by Consumer Council successfully held September 2020, approximately 350 total persons assisted
- Investigations and hackney inspections were conducted, and processing of new and renewal applications were processed without interruption
- COVID Updates provided constantly to all licensees since March 2020
- Includes any order and guidance issued
- Provided information on PPP loans, grants, vaccine availability and other resources
- Direct communication with licensees on any issue

## Provided Relief

- Extension of deadlines for pending renewals and outstanding payments.
- One-Stop shop application for extension of premises
  - Departments involved: License Commission, Informational Services, Inspectional, Public Works, Traffic, Parking & Transportation, City Solicitor and City Manager
    - 163 patio permits (120 w/extensions in the public way)
- Policy change to extended one-day license to allow service of food and alcohol to a non-contiguous area
- 40% reduction (~\$888,000 in savings for businesses) in most renewal licensing fees for businesses renewing for 2021 (in the Fall of 2020) and 2021-2022 (in the Spring of 2021).
  - Changed the manner in which fees were collected allowing businesses to pay in installments and made accommodations for businesses who have decided to “hibernate” through the pandemic.



# EXECUTIVE – COMMUNITY SUPPORT

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## Construction Advisory Committee

- Construction Moratorium
- COVID Guidelines and timeline
- Over 2,000 COVID Construction/Building Applications and Plans and Inspections

## Small Business Advisory Committee Co-Facilitated with CDD

- Pick it up local
- Hello Again, Project Neighbor
- Restaurant Working Group
- Bi-Weekly Small Business Office Hours

## Shelter Restaurant Meals Program

- 167,000 meals \$1.15 million

## Patio Heater Reimbursement Program

- \$40,000 in reimbursements
- Fire Department issued over 80 Permits

## Internal and external multidepartment COVID-19 reopening coordination

## Starlight Square / Poppportunity

- Starlight Season 1 – 133 Safe Shared Experiences
- Poppportunity created 12 pop-up businesses to date

## My Brother's Keeper Summer Program

- Supported with logistics and provided meals



# EXECUTIVE – HOUSING SUPPORT

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## Information, Education, and Outreach

- Created a Housing Line: To date, more than 900 residents accessed information and resources.
- Disseminated information to more than 800 management company contacts regarding City and State Eviction Moratoriums and the City’s Tenants Rights and Resources Notification Ordinance.
- Outreached to management companies and owners to request implementation of temporary policies and practices such as: flexible rent due dates and lease renewal or end dates, suspension of late fees, and modified credit reporting practices.

## Program Development and Implementation

- Collaborated with DHSP and IT to design and implement the Mayor’s Disaster Relief Fund Covid-19 response. 3.1 million dollars distributed to 1,453 Households within 3 months.
- Collaborated with DHSP and CDD to design and implement the Housing Stabilization Program. To date, 1.3 million distributed or committed to 255 residents. Program remains in effect.
- Created a Tenants Rights and Resource Guide in accordance with the Tenant Rights and Resources Notification Ordinance.

## Policy Change and Implementation

- Worked with Law Department on City Eviction Moratorium
- Worked with Law Department on development and implementation of Tenants Rights and Resources Ordinance

## Direct Service

- Provided direct service support to more than 250 residents ranging from information and referral assistance to brief counseling to intensive case management.
- Served as “approver” for MDRF and HSP programs.



# EXECUTIVE – HOUSING SUPPORT

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## Outcomes Summary

- **More than 2,000 residents** served through MDRF, HSP and/or Housing Liaison Office. (note: this does not include the direct services provided by the DHSP Multi-Service Team)
- **\$4.4 million** distributed or committed to **1,708 residents**. (note: this also does not include monies distributed directly through City rental assistance program that MSC team administers)
- **2 Financial Assistance Programs** created and implemented through interdepartmental collaboration.
- **2 Tenant Protection Policies** created and implemented through interdepartmental collaboration.
- **Tenant Resource Guide** created and disseminated.
- More than **800 management companies and owners** informed about tenants' rights and resources.



# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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## Small Business Support

- Working with other City Departments and Cambridge Redevelopment Authority, awarded \$4.2 million in grants and loans to support small businesses facing multiple challenges (\$500,000 from the Mayor's Disaster Relief Fund, \$1.5 Million from the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority Zero-Interest Loan program, and a combined \$2.2 million from Community Development Block Grant Funds and Federal CARES Act funds)
  - COVID Relief
  - COVID Recovery
  - COVID Winter Grant
  - Mayor's Disaster Relief Grants and CRA Loan Program
- Prioritized minority and women-owned businesses who are most at risk
- Worked with CM office to convene the CM's Small Business Advisory Committee to guide the City's interventions to support small businesses throughout the pandemic and continuing through recovery
- Offered one-on-one technical support, coaching and consulting to businesses via phone and Zoom
- Created online database tracking businesses that are open/closed
- Created a consolidated resource of small business assistance programs
- Developed the Pick It Up Cambridge Campaign
- Working with DPW, TPT, License Commission, on the expansion of outdoor dining



# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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## Housing (Rent & Mortgage) Support

- Worked with partner departments on the Housing Stabilization Program to provide rent and mortgage support to Cambridge residents struggling with housing insecurity due to the pandemic's economic impacts utilizing MDRF, CARES Act, and CPA funds
- Worked with residents to help them assess and access available housing assistance, funding, and mortgage forbearance assistance.

## Non-profit Organization Support

- COVID-19 Emergency and Recovery grants -- supported the Community Benefits Advisory Committee to administer \$2,000,000 Community Benefits Funds. Over 200 nonprofit organizations awarded to provide direct services to Cambridge residents impacted by the pandemic.

## Placemaking

- Worked with the Central Square BID and coordinated work of various City departments to support the transformation of municipal parking lot 5 into Starlight Square, which has served as an important and safe gathering space in Central Square and surrounding neighborhoods
- Developing short-term and long-term outdoor dining design guidelines, with the short-term guidelines intended to provide simple and quick templates for businesses for the Spring/Summer 2021 season



# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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## Mobility

- Worked with other communities in the BlueBikes system to create a free 90-day and 30-day memberships for essential workers.
- Transitioned bike education programs to remote format, including easier to schedule online classes -- students and many more adults, including seniors, are now participating.
- Advocated with the MBTA Fiscal Management and Control Board to eliminate or limit proposed service cuts including the proposed elimination of bus route 68

## Community Engagement

- Supported the Port/Area IV Neighborhood Coalition to provide eligible Port residents with free internet service through a neighborhood-specific grant program
- Transitioned Planning Board meetings to remote format in June 2020.
- Creating a new initiative, the Public Space Lab





# HUMAN SERVICE PROGRAMS

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## **Coordination and funding for services for those experiencing homelessness**

- Supported outreach, meals programs, showers, daytime services, testing and vaccination
- Oversaw over 7 million dollars in new contract funding for homeless services during pandemic
- Provided eviction prevention services to hundreds of individuals and families

## **Supported children and families for basic needs and connections**

- Provided on field and virtual programming for hundreds of children and youth
- Provided in person preschool & virtual parenting support
- Provided Summer Food to all who needed from June to Sept at 9 open sites and housing developments

## **Education and Employment to adults and teens**

- Supported summer employment for 700 teens and internships for over 300 during school year
- Provided virtual classes for 750 adult students including access to technology
- Provided college coaching to 250 1st generation college students

## **Support for Seniors**

- Provided virtual classes to over 1000 seniors
- Communicated weekly with over 1300 seniors through Director's call
- Made weekly support calls to homebound seniors
- Worked with food for free to arrange home delivery of food to seniors



# CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY

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CPL team and collaborators worked throughout the pandemic to get physical & virtual library resources to the community:

- Checked out **248,013** physical materials and processed **271,152** returned items.
- Facilitated **46,519** Contactless Hold Pickups at the Main Library and **15,301** at Central, O'Neill and Valente.
- Checked out **563** Chromebooks, hotspots & bundles for home use and offer printing services.
- Responded to **3,023** web inquiries, answered **16,164** patron phone calls and registered **3,149** online Library cards.
- Hosted **3,556** attendees at **62** virtual events for adults and **4592** attendees at **188** virtual public programs for youth.
- **30** events distributing **8,334** books for youth at food pantries/sites, affordable housing sites and library branches.
- Recently started delivery to seniors.
- Initiated staff learning about equity, inclusion and systemic racism through learning sessions, task force and cohort work.
- Continued STEAM partnership with City's STEAM Initiative and InnovatorsforPurpose.

We continue to plan for further reopening, which will include expanding branch services with holds pickup at the Boudreau Branch on April 26 and are in discussions regarding opening the Main Library for limited in-person appointments.



# ELECTION COMMISSION

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## Key Accomplishments

- The Commission administered two elections during the pandemic with unprecedented levels of mail-in voting, adapting to sweeping changes in election laws with very little time to plan and very little space to safely work.
- Election staff worked from early mornings until late at night, seven days a week, in order to process applications, mail out ballots, and track the ballots as they were returned, all while answering thousands of emails and phone calls from voters, administering in-person early voting at three locations, and preparing for in-person voting at all 34 precincts on Election Day.
  - September:
    - Ballots **mailed**: about 25,500
    - Ballots **returned**: about 19,900
    - Voted **early in-person**: about 3,700
    - Voted at the polls **on Election Day**: about 9,600
    - Total **Turnout**: 33,261 / 71,469 = 47% (record turnout for a primary)
  - November:
    - Ballots **mailed**: about 34,000
    - Ballots **returned**: about 30,200
    - Voted **early in-person**: about 14,200
    - Voted at the polls **on Election Day**: about 10,600
    - Total **Turnout**: 55,039/73,381 = 75% (record turnout for a general)



# ELECTION COMMISSION

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## Mail-in Voting:

- Successfully and accurately tallied every vote despite receiving new regulations regarding the advance processing of mail-in ballots only days before we needed to implement them.
- 5 Official Ballot Drop Boxes – Safe and secure. Voter convenience.

## COVID-19 Safety regulations/training:

- Developed COVID-19 safety procedures for 3 early voting sites and 34 polling precincts.
- Provided PPE and COVID-19 safety training for over 300 poll workers to keep the workers and the voters safe during in-person early voting and on election day
- Created a new poll worker position to ensure the health and safety of the voters and workers by offering masks and sanitizer, enforcing social distancing, directing the flow of voters, wiping down surfaces, etc.

## Polling Locations:

- Determined that about half of our polling places were not viable for use during the pandemic and we found new locations for all of them. Some of the locations didn't have enough space to allow for social distancing and other locations were concerned for the safety of their staff, patients and residents.
- Every polling location, even the ones that didn't change locations, were required to be set up differently to accommodate the pandemic – we needed different entrances and exits, additional tables, markings on the floor and outside, safety protection etc.



# FINANCE

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## Mayor's Disaster Relief Fund - Distribution

- Collaborated with DHSP, Auditing and IT departments to set up an automated application through View Point permitting system for the Mayor's Disaster Relief (MDR) Rental/Financial Assistance program. The Finance department took on the role of coordination and distribution of all Relief checks for approved applicants. The first round of distribution of MDR checks were issued on 04/16/2020 and continued through the summer months.
- Collaborated with PIO to set up the automated reporting of the total MDR donations and distributions to the MDR webpage.
- Collaborated with the Mayor's Office and PIO to draft and coordinate thank you emails/letters to the MDR donors.
- Collaborated and coordinated with the DHSP staff members responsible for the application processing a list of applicant questions and issues in order to ensure all applicants received the checks. The listing was updated and discussed weekly via teams.
- Created disbursement detail listing for each MDR check run and distributed to DHSP to assist with answering questions from applicants.
- Worked with Eversource Electric and Gas companies to provide detail payment listing which included the applicant name and address to ensure the disbursement they received was applied properly to the MDR applicant accounts.

## Real Estate, MV Excise, and Water Sewer bills

- Coordinated with our outside credit card processors to waive the processing fees on Real Estate, MV excise, Water Sewer, and Traffic Ticket bills starting at the latest April 1, 2020.
- Updated the Finance website to announce that the City was adopting and implementing the Emergency legislation enacted by the State to extend the due date for Real Estate, Personal Property, bills until June 1, 2020 and waive any late fees up until June 29, 2020.
- Continued to waive credit card fees for water/sewer and excise payments in FY21.
- Purchased a drop box for City Hall to accept all tax and water/sewer bill payments.
- Issued Property tax, MV Excise, and Water/Sewer bills throughout the shutdown with a limited staff on premises.
- Coordinated with ITD to issue workstations to Finance staff that allowed them to work remotely.



# FINANCE

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## CARES – FEMA funds

- Applied for the FEMA funds on-line and coordinated with Police, Fire, DHSP, and Public Works departments a weekly FEMA subgroup Teams meeting to discuss expenditures and OT expenditures being processed.
- Coordinated with Payroll and Auditing staff to develop account codes specific to COVID-19 expenditures in order to properly track the expenditures to report for reimbursement.
- Coordinated and tracked all COVID-19 expenditures and responsible for reporting to FEMA and CARES sites the allowable expenditures on a quarterly basis.
- Responsible for reviewing expenditures and inquiring about their allowability on the Mass MEMA site.

## Finance administration also contributed to the following initiatives:

- Planning for anticipated (\$88M) in American Rescue Plan funds.
- Reduction of fees analysis to assist small businesses;
- Creation of a smartsheet application to facilitate approval of public meetings in conjunction with ZOOM training for staff;
- establishment of check-in stations at five city buildings to ensure employee and visitor safety; establishment of the Park Ambassador Program;
- Establishment of Short-Term Rental compliance program;
- Fiscal liaison to Spaulding Hospital administration for the construction of the Transitional Wellness Center.



# FINANCE

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## Information Technology

- Quickly marshalled the IT resources, hardware, and software to enable an effective remote workforce to maintain vital City operations and municipal services
- Worked with department partners and stakeholders to develop the Mayor's Disaster Relief Fund portal with an online automated voucher program to accelerate payments within just 5 days of launch
- Coordinated with the City Manager's Office and Public Information Office to develop and maintain a new COVID-19 website and data center with extensive analytics and visualization tools to inform the public with timely, reliable information to improve public health outcomes
- Quickly tested, implemented, and refined new systems, workflow, and protocols to enable public access and participation in over 600 online City Council and other public meetings
- Provided new IT training courses to support staff using tools such as Microsoft Teams and launched a new Technology Training Portal to ease access to materials and training when convenient to staff
- Rolled out Multi Factor Authentication (MFA) to all staff, protecting City systems, applications, and information from external threats, whether working remotely in less secure home environments, or inside City buildings

## Personnel Department

- Work as part of a team to draft a variety of COVID-related policies which included reconciliation with federal and state directives:
  - Temporary Policy on COVID-19 Related Employee Absences
  - Temporary Remote Work During COVID-19 Pandemic
  - Temporary Policy on Out of State Travel
  - COVID-19 Prevention Plan: Protocols for Employees with COVID Symptoms, Positive Test Results and/or Potential Exposure
  - COVID-19 Self-Screening Checklist



# FINANCE

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## Personnel Department (continued)

- Provide guidance and communication to Department leaders in implementing and administering COVID-related policies
- Work collaboratively with the Cambridge Public Health Department and other City Departments to ensure the City is adhering to guidelines for quarantining and isolation with respect to employees who have been exposed and/or test positive
- Engage in discussions and negotiations with Unions regarding COVID-related issues, including health and safety practices, operational issues, use of leave, and additional compensation
- Strategize with Departments on best practices regarding staffing and employee health and safety
- Curate virtual trainings on remote work and COVID-related issues and concerns; work with the Fenway Institute to provide SOGI Cultural Responsiveness training to close to 200 employees

## Assessing Department

- The Assessor's Office has effectively adapted to work remotely to effectively provide customer services and outreach to property owners. The department was able to meet the same deadline in submittals to the DOR for certification of the tax rate as in the prior year.
- The Assessing department expanded outreach to the hospitality industry and local business in Cambridge for fiscal year 2021 with letters, emails and zoom meetings with the help of the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce and neighborhood business associations. This additional outreach to the business community is something that the Assessing department will continue to do as the pandemic moves forward.





# FINANCE

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## Purchasing Department

- Collaborated with Auditing and Finance to ensure that the City's fiscal operations continued during the crisis
- Collaborated with Finance to document and track COVID related expenses for possible reimbursement from state and federal government
- Met with DPW on March 13, 2020 prior to "shutdown" to review statutory requirements for emergency procurements under M.G.L. c. 149, 30,39M, and 30B to ensure that city operations would be maintained and able to respond to COVID related situations that threatened the health and safety of people or property in the city
- Worked with Auditing and the Manager's Office to implement the community meals program to the City's unhoused population.
- Conducted emergency procurements for supplies, services and the War Memorial shelter
- Conducted procurements of supplies and services needed to facilitate the return to work in city buildings.

## Budget

- Submitted a revised Annual Operating and Capital Budget for FY21.
- Implemented a successful, abbreviated, and completely virtual Participatory Budgeting process.
- Despite severe fiscal impacts due to COVID-19, proposed only a modest increase in the property tax levy, which was lower than estimated at Budget adoption, while maintaining or expanding programs and initiatives that are a high priority for the community and City Council, through management of vacancies; careful use of reserves; and controlling certain expenditures.



# FINANCE

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## Payroll

- Continued to process weekly payrolls by working with departments to change existing practices and processes based on changed work environments.
- In an effort to follow COVID-19 safety guidelines
  - Created temporary work schedule
  - Utilize limited remote access
- Creative in keeping employees paid timely
  - Reached out to departments to encourage employees to enroll in electronic payment (direct deposit)
  - Provided alternative method in the submission of employees time for employee to receive pay on time
  - Made preparations in the event unable to be on-site to process any pay cycle
  - Established less physical contact by coordinating with the Executive and Audit departments to streamline official documents and distribution of paychecks

## Auditing

- Working in collaboration with other City departments, has successfully modified its operations while fulfilling the Department's mission.
- Many new and unplanned initiatives were launched to provide monetary support to individuals, families, nonprofits, and small businesses experiencing financial hardship, including the Mayor's Disaster Relief Fund, Housing Stabilization Fund, and various Small Business Grant and Loan programs.
- Developed robust policies and procedures to oversee its administration and fiscal controls to adapt to changed work conditions.
- Department focused on prioritizing efforts to ensure the expedited processing of all assistance payments.



# **QUESTIONS**

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE CITY'S COVID-19  
PANDEMIC RESPONSE**

**VISIT:**

**[WWW.CAMBRIDGEMA.GOV/COVID19](http://WWW.CAMBRIDGEMA.GOV/COVID19)**

