

# THE CAMBRIDGE

WINTER/SPRING 2019 ISSUE 2, VOL.3 A PUBLICATION OF THE CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

# LIFE

THECAMBRIDGELIFE.ORG

The "Pull Up"  
Offers Mobile  
Latin Soul Food



Advancing Use of  
Data in Local  
Government

2018 Trash  
Reduction at a  
Glance

Achieving National  
Accreditation

## Public Art in Central Square Cultural District

## Community Benefits Funding Targets Unmet Needs

**A**  
Historical  
Pictorial of  
Building City Hall,  
1888-1890

# 100% Affordable Housing Zoning Overlay

## Why It's Needed & What It Will Do

Housing in Cambridge is getting less affordable.

A family must make \$101,844 per year to afford a 3-bedroom home at market rate.

Affordable Housing helps:  
Teachers • Healthcare workers  
Senior citizens • Social workers  
Small business owners  
Non-profit staff  
Maintenance workers



## How Affordable Housing Is Built

Affordable Housing Partners  
(Just-A-Start, Homeowner's Rehab Inc,  
Cambridge Housing Authority)



City Funding & Funding  
from Other Sources



Available  
Land & Buildings



Affordable Housing for the  
Cambridge Community

## Current Challenges



Cuts in federal funds for  
affordable housing



Rising prices of  
land & buildings



Competition between  
affordable housing developers  
& market-rate developers  
(who can afford to pay more)



Multi-family housing cannot  
be built in all areas of the city,  
limiting the supply of  
affordable units



Many residents are forced  
to leave Cambridge as  
rents continue to rise

## The Idea: 100% Affordable Housing Overlay



Create new standards & design  
requirements that ensure  
community input and  
Planning Board review



Allow affordable housing to be  
built in bigger buildings than  
market-rate housing



Create a faster approval process  
for new affordable housing for  
Cambridge residents

This will allow 100% affordable housing development to compete with market-rate development,  
creating opportunities to build affordable housing in Cambridge.

Community discussion continues. Following a public process, zoning will be written in 2019.

# City Manager's Message

I'd like to start off by thanking the City staff, local agencies, and so many caring members of our community who assisted in the aftermath of the January 14 fire at Cambridge and Hunting Streets. Losing your home and your belongings to a fire is a devastating tragedy. These residents still have a long road ahead of them, and the City will continue to assist them as they figure out how to move forward.

In this edition of The Cambridge Life, you can take a deeper look at the people and initiatives that help make Cambridge life so enjoyable. I am proud of the Cambridge Public Health Department on achieving national accreditation. This accomplishment reflects the staff's dedication to programs and services that support the health and well-being of our residents. Learn about the work of a committed group of

residents serving on our Community Benefits Advisory Committee, which is determining how to distribute funding from the Community Benefits Fund to address the unmet needs of Cambridge residents.

You can also learn about the City's collaboration with Bloomberg Philanthropies What Works Cities Initiative. This renewed partnership will further expand the capabilities of City employees to use data and evidence to achieve even better outcomes that will positively impact the lives of our residents.

Our success is a direct result of the way in which our departments, leadership, and staff work collaboratively with our elected officials and the community to make Cambridge the unique and special place that it is today. I am fortunate to have a strong and



*City Manager Louis A. DePasquale*

dedicated team to carry out the policy initiatives of the City Council and the day-to-day operations that deliver the high-quality City services our community expects.

As always, you are welcome to send me your feedback or ideas by calling my office at 617-349-4300 or emailing me at [citymanager@cambridgema.gov](mailto:citymanager@cambridgema.gov).

Warmest Regards,

*Louis DePasquale*



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Cover Photo Collage: Learn more about Central Square's colorful new murals on Pg. 8-9.

# COMMUNITY BENEFITS FUNDING

**Expected to Address Unmet Needs  
of Cambridge Residents**



Photos: Kyle Klein

# Like in any city, Cambridge has residents who struggle to meet their basic needs.



**M**any families have been impacted by the affordable housing crisis. In addition to

**Through zoning amendments and agreements, some developers pledge funding for community benefits purposes before they begin work on certain projects.**

housing, some residents also struggle with gaps in other service areas, including financial security and access to behavioral and mental health services.

In Cambridge, we have a unique opportunity to address the unmet needs of our residents through the Community Benefits Fund. Through zoning amendments and agreements, some developers pledge funding for community benefits purposes before they begin work on certain projects. Approximately \$7.5 million has been received by the City to date, and at various stages of development, additional funding will be deposited into the Community Benefits Fund to work with our nonprofit community to further assist in the expansion of services to better meet the needs of Cambridge residents.

To distribute these funds as effectively as possible, the City completed a comprehensive Needs Assessment in 2017 which identified and prioritized the community's most pressing needs and service gaps. The Needs Assessment was adopted by the City Council in May 2017. A Community Benefits

Advisory Committee was subsequently formed to develop a framework that ensures these funds

are used in ways that address the needs of the Cambridge community as effectively as possible. To maximize the impact of the Community Benefits Fund, the committee focused first on the top tier needs of affordable housing and homelessness, financial security, and behavioral health. The initial funding will be targeted toward addressing the needs of families with children who are low-income or in poverty, particularly those headed by single women. The Guiding Principles for Community Benefits Funding are intended to meet the following objectives:

- Frame needs thoughtfully;
- Build on existing assets and programs;
- Promote holistic approaches, innovation, and collaboration; and
- Simplify the application process.

The City issued a request for proposals so that non-profit organizations could propose plans that are responsive to Cambridge families and their unique needs. Since many of these needs are interrelated, the City is looking for

non-profit organizations to build collaborative partnerships that consider innovative approaches that are responsive to the needs of Cambridge families.

“Our approach to Community Benefits Funding is one that stresses partnership and collaboration,” said Deputy City Manager Lisa Peterson, who also serves as Chair of the Community Benefits Advisory Committee. “The process also encourages local nonprofits to enter into partnerships with each other to create better networks that can support Cambridge families.”

In April 2019, the City will select up to five partnerships that would each receive a \$30,000 planning grant to further develop their proposal over a six-month period. Final proposals will be reviewed by the City and up to five partnerships will receive an award of up to \$750,000 to implement the proposals during a three-year period.

The objective of these grants is to address the needs of these families by enhancing housing and economic stability and family well-being while increasing capacity to further advance coordination among non-profit organizations and providers.

To learn more about the Community Benefits Fund, visit **[CambridgeMA.Gov/communitybenefits](http://CambridgeMA.Gov/communitybenefits)**.



# THE “PULL UP” OFFERS MOBILE

# LATIN

The journey to entrepreneurship  
was years in the making.

# SOUL FOOD

“The Cambridge Food Truck Pilot, which launched in the fall of 2017, gives special consideration to new businesses and provided a platform for Robin Brown to get his business off the ground...” ”

# Perfect Timing for the Young Restaurateur



**W**hen Robin Brown learned that the Cambridge Food Truck Pilot was accepting applications last year, it was perfect timing for the young restaurateur. He had recently flown 3,000 miles to Oregon to purchase a truck, fridge, stovetop, and fryolator. The cross-country ride home marked the first time his food truck, The Pull-Up LLC, was on the road, but for Brown, 28, the journey to entrepreneurship was years in the making.

Brown grew up in East Cambridge, where food was central to family life and he spent hours in the kitchen with his grandmother, Luz, making Puerto Rican and Columbian recipes. Brown majored in Business Economics at UMass Lowell. While working as a medical transport driver in 2016, he was in an

**Now, I have pulled myself up from my hardships to become the CEO of my own business and am 100% committed to being an entrepreneur.**

accident that left him temporarily disabled. Immobilized and unable to work, he descended into a depression, until his unhappiness eventually helped put his life goals into sharper focus.

Brown began channeling his energy into his dream of owning a restaurant, starting with a food truck. He developed a business plan and refined recipes for the “Latin Soul Food” that his truck would offer. A few months later, he found a red truck on Craigslist.

Brown soon learned, however, that his new business would have to go through several City processes before he could legally operate.

The Cambridge Food Truck Pilot, which launched in the fall of 2017, gives special consideration to new businesses and provided a platform for Brown to get his business off the ground, gain exposure, finesse his food prep strategy, and refine his menu offerings.

The Pull-Up debuted in April 2018, with shifts at North Point Park and Central Square through the Cambridge Food Truck Pilot, in addition to a Wednesday lunchtime shift at Vecna Robotics in Alewife.

Brown’s bestselling items are carne guisada (beef stew), fried chicken, and empanadas. Batches of rice and beans are seasoned with his

grandmother’s sofrito recipe, a blend of Latin

spices. The truck has gained a reputation for its generous portions and reasonable prices, and customers are often lined up before The Pull Up even arrives.

During his first weeks of vending, the popular empanadas always sold out, so he adjusted food quantities to meet customer demand. He also added vegetarian options to his menu after getting repeated requests from customers.

Brown initially named his business The Pull-Up for the sense of

convenient dining it evoked, but as it has grown, the name has taken on a more symbolic meaning.

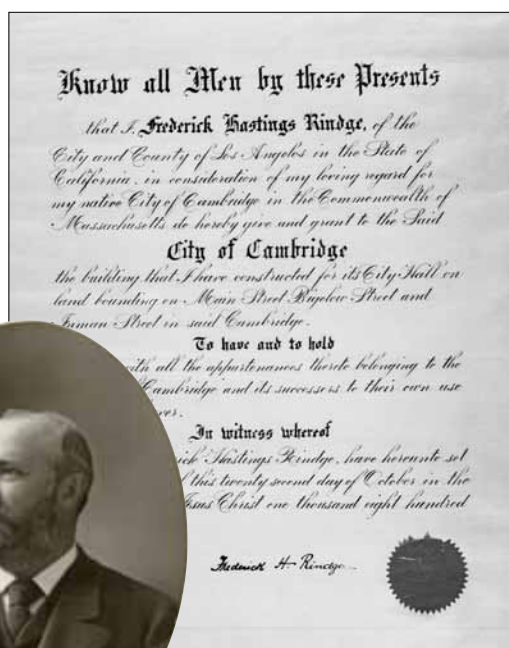
“The Pull-Up reflects my path in life,” said Brown. “I have been through a lot, starting from humble beginnings and going through feelings of hopelessness after my accident. Now, I have pulled myself up from my hardships to become the CEO of my own business and am 100% committed to being an entrepreneur.”

“This is my city,” Brown proudly exclaimed. “I’m proud to be a Cantabrigian and I specifically chose Cambridge to make my mark.”

For more information about the Food Truck Program and schedules, visit **CambridgeMA.Gov/foodtruckschedule**.



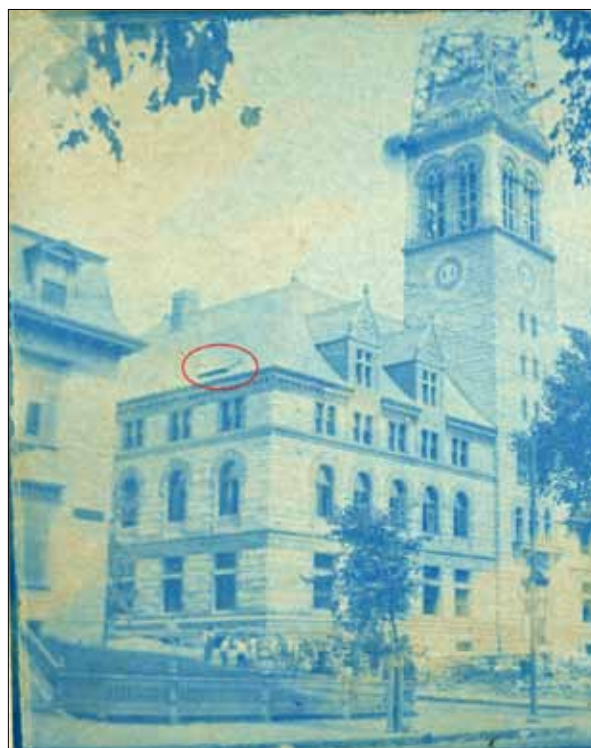
# Building City Hall, 1888-1890



**Deed of Gift, 1890.** F.H. Rindge.  
Born 1857 in East Cambridge;  
died 1905 in California.

Frederick Hastings Rindge was the City's greatest benefactor. His father was a wealthy businessman; his mother had an inherited fortune of her own. Frederick was the only Rindge child to live to adulthood, and when his parents died in the mid-1880s, he inherited \$3 million. Hastings married and moved to California for his health but maintained strong ties to his hometown.

Late in that decade, when City officials began to discuss the construction of new municipal buildings that would befit Cambridge's importance, Rindge stepped forward to help the city he loved. In 1887, he agreed to give Cambridge three new buildings: Cambridge Public Library, Manual Training School, and Cambridge City Hall. In each case, he oversaw all phases of construction, working with trusted Cambridge associates, and retained ownership until each project was complete; only then did he deed the property over to the City.

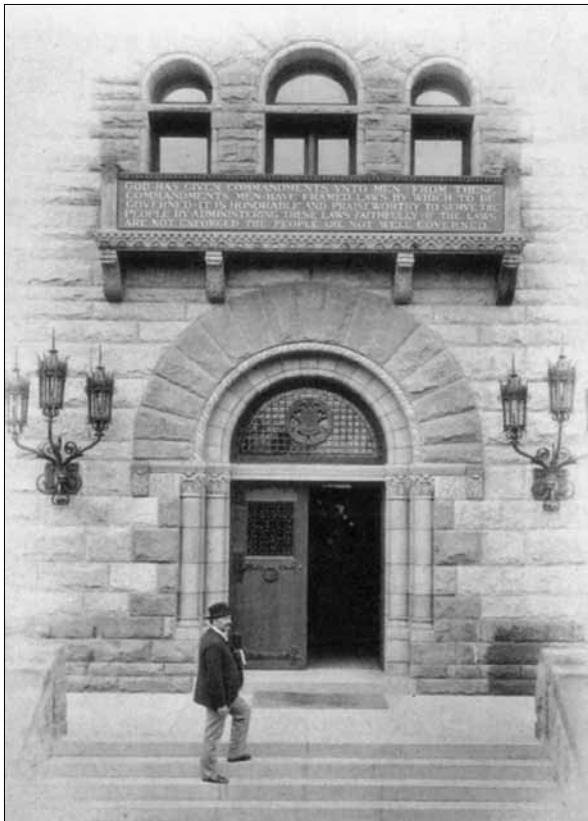


**City Hall under construction, 1889.** Longfellow, Alden & Harlow, architects. Circled above is then skylight installed in the City Engineer's office (now the Purchasing Department). House in left foreground was demolished ca. 1950 for construction of current Lombardi Building at 831 Mass. Ave.

## Edward Hyde house.

Moved in 1888 to clear site for City Hall.  
Now at 22 Bigelow Street.





Front Entrance, 1890. With original doors.



City Hall Bell Tower.



Main Lobby, 1890. Note the spittoon – placed there for the convenience of the public.



City Hall 1896.

A brief poem, possibly written by Rindge himself, is engraved on the bell.

Cheerfully I ring the hour  
From my home within the tower  
But I would a lesson teach  
Even bells mens' hearts may reach.

The Lesson:  
The ballot free and pure  
The rights of all secure  
Wrong finds antidote  
When each voter casts his vote.



# NEW MURALS

Bring More Color and Vibrancy  
to City's Cultural District

“An intersection where life science, arts, culture and community connect, the murals celebrate the local creative economy, equity, inclusion, social, and environmental justice.”

# Public Art in Central Square Cultural District



Artist Sneha Shrestha beside her mural at corner of Mass. Ave. and Main St.

In November, Central Square received a second, five-year state designation as a cultural district from Mass Cultural Council.

Cultural districts help local arts, humanities, and science organizations improve the quality and range of their public programs so that more local families can benefit from them. They enhance the experience for visitors and thus attract more tourist dollars and tax revenue. And they attract artists, cultural organizations, and entrepreneurs of all kinds – enhancing property values and making communities more attractive.

The Central Square Business Association (CSBA), with support from the City, is also working on establishing Central Square as a Business Improvement District.

Last fall, an array of colorful murals began appearing around Central Square – a heart blossoming on the back of a convenience store; eyes staring out of the entrance to a parking garage; an echo of Mass. Ave. appearing on a building

**... CSBA and Cambridge Arts organized a fundraiser, which generated tremendous engagement, indicating how important public art was to the community.**

facade. Over 10 murals were painted, and more are planned this spring. The Central Square murals, a collaboration of the CSBA, Cambridge Arts, and local property owners, continues the tradition of public art in the City's cultural district and contributes to the unique character of the area.

Central Square has always been known as a diverse and vibrant area and the seat of Cambridge City government. The mural campaign pays homage to the past, present, and future of Central Square. An intersection where life science, arts, culture, and community connect, the murals celebrate the local creative economy, equity, inclusion, social, and environmental justice.

"Public art is a powerful tool and we wanted Central Square murals to serve as a gallery space that everyone could see and have access to," said Michael Monestime, CSBA Executive Director.

To fully engage the community and involve them in the process that would support the creation of the artwork for the mural project, the CSBA and Cambridge Arts organized a fundraiser, which generated tremendous engagement, indicating how important public art was to the community.

The project received matching funds from Mass Development, and

funding through the City's Participatory Budgeting process. The support and participation of local business owners also helped strengthen their relationship with the community.

The artists were chosen largely on locality and established connections with Cambridge. One participating

artist, Sneha Shrestha, exemplifies the Mural Project's connection to the community it serves. "Cambridge has played an integral role in the various stages of my life and Central Square has been a huge part of it," said Shrestha. "I hope people realize and appreciate how colorful Central Square is... My hope is that my mural sparks conversations and helps everyone appreciate the differences around them. What happens when various stakeholders living in a fast-growing community come together? We spark conversations and build understanding and acknowledgement of differing cultures and perspectives."

The timing of the Central Square Mural Project falls around the 10-year anniversary of Modica Way, more commonly known as "Graffiti Alley," a staple of Cambridge that has drawn in many visitors.

"We hope our community and visitors can see public art wherever they are in Central Square, and throughout Cambridge," said Jason Weeks, Executive Director of Cambridge Arts. "The connections that art brings can be timeless and extremely valuable to the culture of a community."

Learn more at: **Centralmurals.com** or **CambridgeArtsCouncil.org**.

Photos: *Opposite Page: Lena McCarthy's colorful mural can be found in the parking lot behind Pandemonium Books and Games. Victor "Marka27" Quiñonez works on his mural, Queendom, above HMart, 581 Mass. Ave. Photos by Todd Mazer.*

# Advancing the Use of Data and Evidence in Local Government



Over the past few years, the City has made substantial progress in using data to be more transparent, efficient, and innovative. The Open Data Ordinance, adopted in 2015, was the official start of the City's commitment to improving public access to important data. The initiative provides more transparency and openness in the day-to-day operations of the City. The ordinance established the need for the City to have an Open Data Review Board – an advisory committee of City staff and residents – to further the ability to create and expand open data projects.

Manager. “The Open Data program has resulted in many collaborative efforts and helped empower City employees and the public to leverage data in unique and interesting ways.”

One of the most important achievements of the last two years has been the creation of a framework for running and growing the Open Data Program. This framework has led to numerous exciting projects including the creation of data stories that garner significant community interest. By making data more accessible and more interesting to engage with, the City has attracted a wider audience. Over the last two

Data Driven Decision Making for Managers; Data Storytelling for Communications Professionals and Analysts; and Strategies for Managing Bias in Decision Making. These trainings set the stage for future analytics work.

The City has also renewed its engagement with Bloomberg Philanthropies What Works Cities Initiative to focus on Cambridge achieving What Works Cities Certification within the next two years. As part of the effort, we will expand staff's data skills. Upcoming activities include a yearlong engagement with GovEx on data

## The Open Data program established values that the City prides itself in maintaining: transparency and openness with the public...

The Open Data program established values that reflect City priorities: transparency and openness with the public; improved City operations through the use of data; and community engagement and public-private partnerships to collaboratively tackle important problems. Open data enables departments to provide more information and give the public a better understanding of the work of the City, and also creates a greater cohesiveness amongst City staff when building upon the same mission collectively.

“We’ve made great strides,” said Josh Wolff, Open Data Program

years, the Open Data Program has offered data visualization training that teaches interested residents and City staff how to transform data from spreadsheets into engaging, interactive dashboards.

## Using Data and Evidence to Improve Outcomes

The City recently partnered with the Center for Government Excellence (GovEx), which is based at Johns Hopkins University, to train staff to work with data more effectively. Four interactive trainings were held, covering topics such as Data Driven Decision Making for Executive Leaders;



analytics projects, and employee focused trainings on performance analytics, open data, advanced analytics, and community engagement. The hope is that this renewed partnership will further expand the capabilities of City employees to use data and evidence to achieve even better outcomes that will positively impact the lives of our residents.



# 2018 Trash Reduction at a Glance

Cambridge had an extraordinary 2018 for trash reduction.

In April 2018, we expanded curbside compost citywide from 5,200 households to 25,000 households (8,100 buildings). Learn about the City's ongoing efforts to reduce waste at [CambridgeMA.Gov/recycling](http://CambridgeMA.Gov/recycling).

**9,000** Tons of Recycling  
collected curbside

**1,200** Tons of Food Waste  
collected curbside  
since April '18

**2,018** Tons of Yard Waste  
collected for composting

**100** Tons of Scrap Metal recycled  
at DPW Recycling Center

**8%** Reduction in trash since rollout  
of curbside compost collection

City of Cambridge  
**Community Electricity Program**

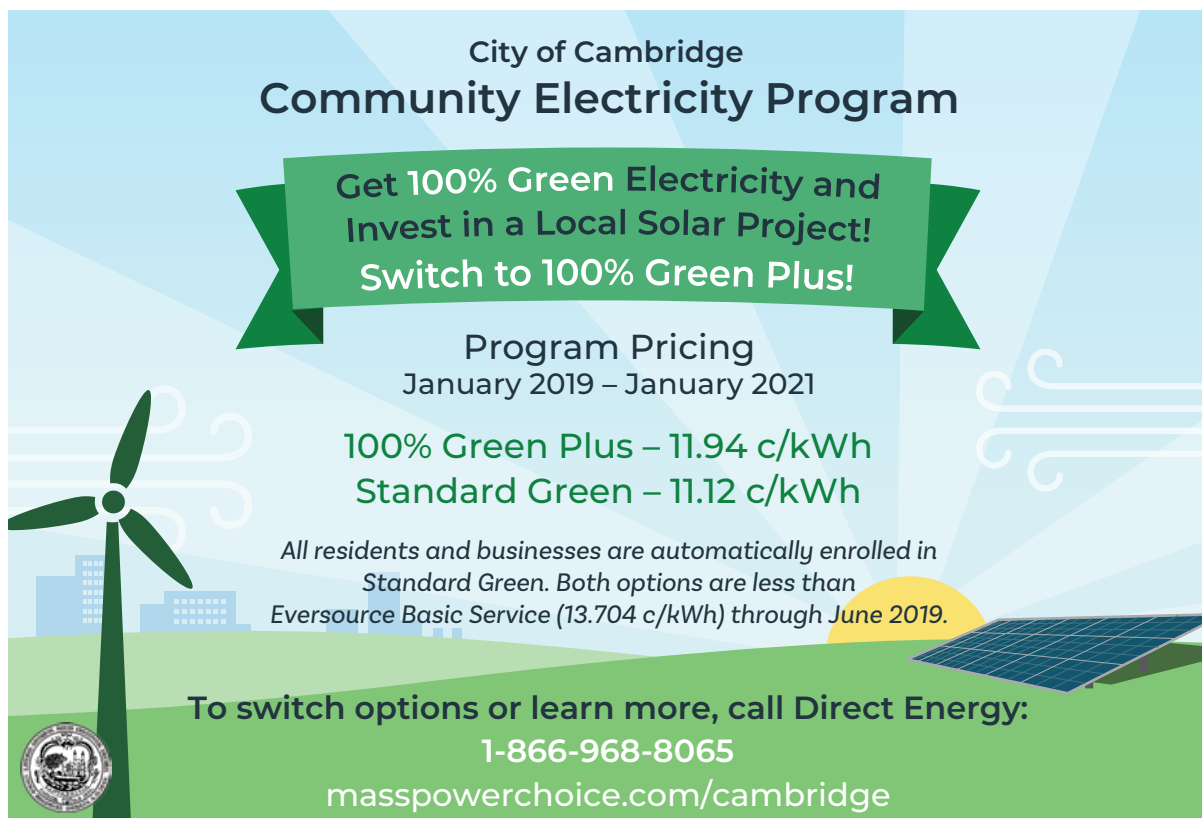

**Get 100% Green Electricity and  
Invest in a Local Solar Project!  
Switch to 100% Green Plus!**

Program Pricing  
January 2019 – January 2021

100% Green Plus – 11.94 c/kWh  
Standard Green – 11.12 c/kWh

*All residents and businesses are automatically enrolled in  
Standard Green. Both options are less than  
Eversource Basic Service (13.704 c/kWh) through June 2019.*

To switch options or learn more, call Direct Energy:  
**1-866-968-8065**  
[masspowerchoice.com/cambridge](http://masspowerchoice.com/cambridge)

# Achieving National Accreditation

Q&A with Chief Public Health Officer

Claude A. Jacob



## The Cambridge Public Health Department recently achieved national accreditation. What is public health accreditation?

Public health accreditation is a voluntary process that was launched in 2011. To date, over 200 health departments in the U.S. have met the Public Health Accreditation Board's rigorous national standards for delivering quality programs and services to the community. In Massachusetts, only three other governmental public health agencies have met these standards – the City of Boston, the City of Worcester, and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

brought together local leaders in public health, health care, urban planning, housing, public safety, education, business, and the nonprofit sector, as well as hundreds of residents. The data and key themes in the 2014 City of Cambridge Community Health Assessment informed Cambridge's first ever Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), which has set the City's health agenda through 2020.

We're now in Year 4 of the CHIP, and have made tangible progress in the City's four health priority areas: mental/behavioral health and substance abuse; violence prevention; healthy, safe, and affordable housing; and healthy eating and active living.

housing, access to healthy food, and substance abuse. For people who live and work in Cambridge, this collaborative approach to solving complex problems means better services, policies, and systems, and ultimately, a healthier community.

## What did your department gain from undertaking this process?

We learned a lot about ourselves as a department and we learned a lot about the contributions and commitment of our City partners. I feel that going through this process has helped us build more effective and strategic partnerships to tackle the health priority areas for our community. We also improved our

**The Board recognized the Cambridge Public Health Department's committed staff and progressive leadership, our strong community partnerships, our use of data to improve health, and our collaborative approach to health equity.**

## What organizational strengths did the Accreditation Board cite?

The Board recognized the Cambridge Public Health Department's committed staff and progressive leadership, our strong community partnerships, our use of data to improve health, and our collaborative approach to health equity.

## To achieve accreditation, did you work with other City departments?

Absolutely. City departments and community organizations have been essential partners. Our accreditation journey began in 2013 when we developed a Community Health Assessment to identify the City's major health needs. This process

Many of these gains are the direct result of innovative programs and policies developed by partners, like the City's Community Development, Human Services, Police, Public Health, and School departments, as well as Cambridge Health Alliance, through citywide initiatives, such as Vision Zero, Envision Cambridge and the Domestic and Gender-Based Violence Initiative.

## What does this mean for Cambridge residents?

I think the accreditation process has raised the profile of public health in Cambridge. The City is using a public health lens more and more frequently to look at issues such as climate change, transportation,

internal systems to better serve the community. I am especially grateful to our staff, our community partners, and the City's leadership for making this achievement possible through their strong support.

## Anything else you would like to add?

Accreditation is a five-year designation and our department is accredited through 2023. We're kicking off the reaccreditation process this April with the launch of the *2019 Cambridge Community Health Assessment Survey* (see opposite page of the publication). Over 1,600 people took the survey in 2013, we're hoping even more will participate this year. Visit us at **CambridgePublicHealth.org**.



2019  
CAMBRIDGE  
**COMMUNITY  
HEALTH  
ASSESSMENT**  
COMING  
THIS SPRING

## About the upcoming Community Health Assessment

The Cambridge Public Health Department conducts a Community Health Assessment every five years to identify health strengths and needs in Cambridge.

Key results help guide future services, programs, and policies for community agencies and organizations.

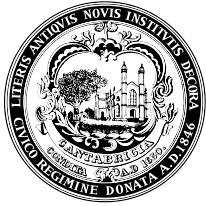
**We want to hear from you to ensure that all who live, learn, work, and play in Cambridge are represented.**

**We use a variety of methods to gather a complete picture of the health of our community:**

- A community survey, online and on paper, translated into Amharic, Arabic, Haitian Creole, Hindi, and Spanish.
- Focus groups with residents.
- Community outreach events to gather feedback.
- Review of Cambridge health data to identify key health outcomes, disparities, and trends over time.



Learn more at  
[cambridgepublichealth.org](http://cambridgepublichealth.org)



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## New Subscription Center for Alerts & Email Updates



**CodeRED Emergency Alerts**



**Citizen Observer**



**Trash, Recycling & Compost Reminders**



**Weekly Email Newsletter**

Register to receive important alerts, including snow emergency parking bans, crime alerts, curbside collection and street cleaning reminders, all in one easy and convenient location, through the City's new online Subscription Center, **[CambridgeMA.Gov/Subscribe](http://CambridgeMA.Gov/Subscribe)**. This landing page also includes opportunities to sign up for

construction and project updates, and newsletters from City departments, including the new *CityView Weekly*, which highlights City news, job opportunities, community events, public meetings, informational videos, and *The Cambridge Life Blog*.

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