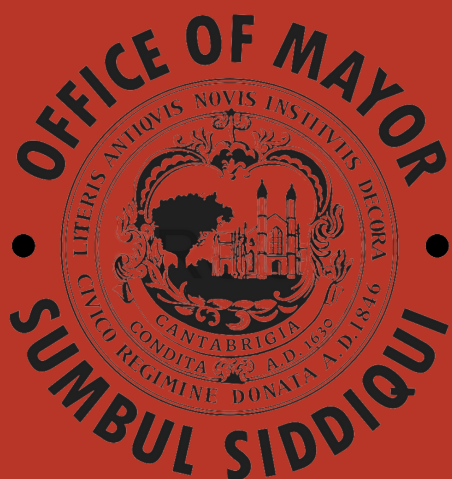


FIRST QUARTER 2022



OFFICE OF MAYOR
SUMBUL SIDDIQUI



DEAR CAMBRIDGE,

The first six months of my second term as Mayor have been eventful! I am thrilled by what we have accomplished so far. I want to highlight what my office has been working on and review the first quarter of this term.

When I was sworn into office at an outdoor ceremony on January 3, 2022, it was 15 degrees and COVID-19 cases were spiking. It was a difficult time, but I am always amazed by Cambridge's resilience. In my inauguration speech, I said that what makes Cambridge unique is that we hold ourselves to a high standard and we are not easily satisfied; this drive is what often puts Cambridge at the forefront of change. My goal is to keep making progress on the issues that face our residents and continue striving for a more equitable city.

In this review, please find our highlights from the first quarter of this term, and do not hesitate to reach out with your thoughts. As I say in all my newsletters, I am always open to addressing concerns and receiving feedback, so please continue sending ideas my way. I look forward to all we can accomplish during the rest of the term.



PUSHING POLICY PRIORITIES FORWARD

We have made significant progress in my priority policy areas! One of my biggest priorities last term was starting the RISE pilot - Recurring Income for Success and Empowerment - and showing what basic income can do for families in Cambridge. Given the success of the pilot, I knew that we needed to expand that work, and in April I announced that the City would allocate \$22 million in American Rescue Plan funding to extend direct cash assistance (\$500 a month) to all families under 200% of the Federal Poverty Limit. While a number of cities are implementing pilots similar to RISE, this allocation will make Cambridge the only city in the country to provide cash assistance to all families in poverty. Cambridge, once again, is at the forefront of change and innovative ideas.

There are also longer term efforts that my office has been spending time on that are moving forward: the Charter Review Committee has been selected and will start its work next month, the Universal Pre-K Ad Hoc Committee that I named is meeting quarterly, and we were able to secure funding for every high school student to receive a free MBTA Charlie Card starting in the upcoming school year.

I also appointed two Working Groups: the Climate Crisis Working Group and the Fare Free Working Group to engage residents and stakeholders and push forward these policy priorities. Working with Councillor Nolan who chaired the Climate Crisis Working Group, we released a strong report and will be working on implementation throughout the term. The Fare Free Working Group, chaired by Councillor Azeem, recently wrapped up its final meeting and provided recommendations for the City to implement. We continue to meet with the MBTA and the City of Boston, and we have \$2 million allocated from ARPA funding ready to spend if we can agree on a pilot with all stakeholders.



SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRIORITIES

One of my top priorities as Chair of the School Committee is to eradicate the inequities that we see in our student success outcomes. In an effort to increase college graduation rates among first-generation students, I collaborated with School Committee Members Ayesha Wilson and Fred Fantini, the school district and Lesley University to initiate an Early College pilot in January. Early College programs are proven to increase retention of first-generation and students of color in college, allowing students to graduate college early and in less debt. Lesley University and CRLS received a state designation as a Massachusetts Early College Program, expanding the program from 50 students to over 100 CRLS students and providing the opportunity to earn college credits while fulfilling high school graduation requirements.



Additionally, I spent a lot of time with the Committee this spring crafting the FY23 budget with a focus on recovery from lost learning during COVID and providing more resources for social and emotional learning for our students. The Committee is also working closely with the Title IX Aurelia Advocates to update the language about sexual violence and reporting in the Title IX policy.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE PRIORITIES

One of my favorite parts of being Mayor is getting to work with students. Spending time in classrooms is always a highlight for me, and so far this term I have been able to meet in person with students a lot more. The past few months I visited several kindergarten classrooms to brainstorm ideas to improve the city. The students always have innovative ideas for Cambridge including a pet daycare, bicycles for everyone, a building where people can get free compliments, and toy libraries.

I have also attended and hosted a number of events with students that showcase the diversity in our community. My office attended the first Pride Day at CRLS and the 8th grade ELA students at Putnam Avenue invited me to their classroom to present their arguments for a Malcolm X day. I spoke about my experience as a Muslim and Asian-American Mayor at the first Asian American Assembly hosted by the Pan-Asian American club at CRLS. I hosted the Sisters with a Dream, an afterschool enrichment program for girls of color, in City Hall and answered their questions about what it's like being a mayor of color. And as the city celebrated Juneteenth, I read "Juneteenth with Mazie" to children at the Cambridge Public Library.

In an effort to highlight Black and Brown authors, the Cambridge Public Library, My Brother's Keeper, the City Manager's Office, and my office created mini Liberation Libraries around the City with books to foster understanding about identity, liberation, and Black excellence for our young residents.



CONSTITUENT SERVICES

Providing excellent constituent service is the most important role my office fulfills. My office provides an accessible and approachable space for residents to bring their suggestions, challenges, and requests for support. In just the first six months of this term, we received **1,040 inquiries** from residents who get in touch with our office in one of the following ways: coming in-person to our office, contacting us via phone, email, or social media, and attending office hours or coffee hours I hold.



We work closely with city departments and agencies to help get residents the assistance they need: the Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee for help with bill payments, Just-A-Start for tenant-landlord mediation services, Homeowners Rehab Inc. for home improvement grants, Greater Boston Legal Services for advice and representation, and Senator Warren and Congresswoman Pressley's Offices for support dealing with state and federal agencies regarding immigration or emergency travel requests.

Working directly with residents is one of my favorite parts of being Mayor. No matter if the issue seems big or small, I love being able to help residents with a problem they are experiencing. And it means the world to me when people let me know we were able to help them.

Just this week, a family who attended our Bollywood Night came up to me to thank me for my office's work. They are both scientists, but only one was a US citizen. After getting married, they filed for a green card with USCIS but their application was far outside normal processing times and they were having trouble getting help from other offices. When we received their case, we worked with Senator Warren's immigration team and continued following up until their case was successfully resolved.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Meeting with community members and engaging with residents directly is something that I deeply missed during my first term as Mayor when we spent most of the time isolating. Increasing accessibility and celebrating diversity are extremely important to me, and I work to center my office's community engagement work with both of those in mind.



During Black History Month, my office provided Cambridge residents free tickets to the Museum of African American History (MAAH) to celebrate and highlight the importance of Black History. Over 100 residents visited MAAH with our tickets throughout the month. I also visited MAAH with the CRLS Black Student Union and had a wonderful time learning with them. Given the popularity of these tickets, I have been working with the Director of Libraries to start providing free passes to MAAH for our residents year-round through our public library's free museum pass program. More to come on that soon!

The City Manager Search process was one of the most crucial and extensive public engagement initiatives my office took part in. Working closely with Vice Mayor Mallon, the chair of the Government Operations Committee, we set out to ensure a diverse set of residents had the opportunity to participate. My office facilitated 18 specific focus group conversations in one month - ranging from non-profit leaders and the Black Pastors Alliance to unhoused residents and environmental advocates. The results were impactful and helped shape the search process. The City Council hired Yi-An Huang in June to serve as the next City Manager and he will start in September.

Vice Mayor Mallon and I also worked together on the 5th Warm Heart Warm Socks Drive to collect pairs of socks for our unhoused residents and work with CASPAR to distribute them directly to those in need. Thanks to the generosity of residents and partners, I was thrilled to complete another successful year of this drive.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We celebrated Climate Month in April with events highlighting policies that help with our climate goals. On Earth Day, my office and Elevate Youth teamed up to clean up the Charles River by Weeks Bridge. On Earth Day, the Department of Public works and I planted a cherry blossom tree with the Baldwin School's first graders.

On April 13th, I was thrilled to host the Cambridge Community Iftar after a two-year hiatus due to COVID-19. My office partnered with the City's Employees' Committee on Diversity, CPS Muslim Affinity Committee, the Islamic Society of Boston to organize one of the largest community iftars in the City with more than 600 attendees. We have also helped host Eid celebrations for residents at Russell Field and I was honored to attend the White House Eid celebration in May!



In an effort to support local businesses and encourage bike riding in the community, my office hosted the Mayor's Bike Bonanza. Over 100 residents joined me and my team to bike across the city and stop at local businesses.

In recognition of Mental Health Awareness Month in May, my office gave away 5 subscriptions to Headspace, a mindful meditation mobile app that helps users relax and alleviate stress. This was a part of my office's effort to highlight the importance of mental well-being and encourage people to take care of their mental health. We also hosted Yoga on the Lawn outside City Hall and organized a mental health training for city employees and will organize a second one this fall.

June was a busy month! To celebrate Pride Month, my office worked with the LGBTQ+ Commission to host Pride Brunch at City Hall with over 100 attendees. We were delighted to continue this decades-long tradition. In partnership with the Cambridge Families of Color Coalition, my office staged the first Juneteenth Parade in the City of Cambridge on June 20th. We had Cambridge firefighters, paramedics, police officers, Miss Cambridge, student groups like Friday Night Hype, and over a hundred residents marching in the parade chanting proudly "Black Joy, Black Excellence." The parade also stopped by the house of the first Black Chief firefighter, Chief Patrick Raymond. I have no doubt that the parade will continue to grow in years to come.

I LOOK FORWARD TO
WHAT WE CAN
ACCOMPLISH DURING
THE REST OF THIS
TERM!



THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO READ MY
FIRST QUARTER REVIEW. IF YOU HAVE IDEAS,
SUGGESTIONS, OR CONCERNS PLEASE CONTACT
MY OFFICE

PHONE: 617-349-4321

EMAIL: MAYOR@CAMBRIDGEMA.GOV

NEWSLETTER: [HTTPS://BIT.LY/2OF3ZV5](https://bit.ly/2of3zv5)

SOCIAL MEDIA: @MAYORSIDDIQUI

CAMBRIDGE CITY HALL 795 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139