



OFFICE OF MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI

# Third Quarter Review

JANUARY - JUNE 2023





Dear Cambridge,

It is with a mix of disbelief and sincere gratitude that I find myself in the final six months of my second term as Mayor of Cambridge. As I reflect on the achievements and milestones of the past year and a half, I am reminded of all of the progress we have accomplished together.

It was a difficult start to the year, with the tragic killing of Arif Faisal that shook us to the core and sparked difficult conversations. Through it all, our community has remained resilient and held city leaders accountable. Over the last six months, it has been your active engagement and demand for progress that has propelled us forward. The City has heard your voices, and has already implemented changes to ensure the safety of all our residents (more on the specific policy below). I am deeply grateful for your tireless advocacy.

Looking ahead, my office has ambitious goals for the next six months. I plan to continue to address the inequities that persist in our city, ensuring access to affordable housing, tackling climate change, and fostering civic engagement. In the coming months, we will work diligently to implement policies and initiatives that address these issues head-on.

I am always open to addressing concerns and hearing your ideas, so please do not hesitate to reach out with your thoughts. Let's continue to build upon our achievements, support one another, and drive positive change in every corner of our city.

**SUMBUL SIDDIQUI**

MAYOR OF CAMBRIDGE, MA

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# Engaging with the Cambridge Community

**In 2023, my office continued to focus on our two key engagement objectives: increase accessibility and celebrate diversity.**

By bringing City Hall to the community, we have successfully engaged with thousands of residents, ensuring their voices are heard and their perspectives are valued.

To establish multiple consistent methods of communication, I continued to organize monthly **Coffee Hours** at City Hall and **Meet and Greets** at housing developments. This year, I met over 175 residents at City Hall, Finch Apartments and Daniel F. Burns Apartments in North Cambridge, Rivermark Apartments in Cambridgeport, and Roosevelt Towers near Inman Square.

I also **spoke at over 50 events** across the city. Whether it was the opening of a new small business, commemorating an important holiday, or advocating on behalf of our neighbors, I loved getting the opportunity to connect with residents and share my insights.

To celebrate diversity, my office continued long-standing traditions and created new ways to highlight the many identities in our community. During **Black History Month**, we proudly announced that all Cambridge Public Library cardholders would have free

access to tickets for the Museum of African American History (MAAH). This initiative expanded upon the successful giveaway we conducted in February 2022. We also organized the **6th Annual Warm Hearts, Warm Feet Sock Drive** in collaboration with Vice Mayor Mallon, collecting and donating over 1,700 pairs of wool socks to support unhoused residents during the winter season.



**Women's History Month** was filled with joyful celebrations, including story times held across the district, a themed trivia night, and an art contest with 45 submissions. I enjoyed collaborating with the City's Employees' Committee on Diversity, CPS Muslim Affinity Committee, and the Islamic Society of Boston to host **Cambridge's largest Community Iftar**, which saw an incredible turnout of over 1,000 attendees.

My office collaborated with multiple city departments to celebrate **Earth Month** in



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April. I was especially excited when over 150 residents joined me and local small businesses for the second annual Bike Bonanza. The City Arborist and I also held a number of tree plantings with Cambridge Public School students and I hosted a Charles River Clean-Up with Elevate Youth.

In June, I was thrilled at the return of our in person Pride Brunch with a new twist. **Glam Up and Go** was the 34th annual celebration of Pride in the city and 300 people joined us for the reimagined event filled with food, music, performances, and fun! The city also celebrated Juneteenth with the second annual **Juneteenth Freedom Parade** and Celebration highlighting the contributions of the Black community to our city.

These events and initiatives are just a glimpse of my office's commitment to community engagement and building a stronger, more inclusive Cambridge.

Although I have been having a blast meeting with residents in person, we also want to engage people online to help spread information and resources. We have maintained an active online presence, regularly updating residents through our biweekly newsletter and social media channels. As a result, our online community has grown to over **16,000 individuals** across all platforms.

I am grateful to have connected with so many residents throughout this term!



**Photos by Elizabeth Pierre**



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# ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

## JANUARY

Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service  
Martin Luther King Jr. School Storytime

## FEBRUARY

Sock Drive  
Free MAAH Admission  
Free Community Ice Skating  
Roosevelt Tower Meet and Greet  
Itn'l Mother Language Day Poetry Contest  
Pathway for Immigrant Workers Info Session

## MARCH

Cambridge Community Iftar  
Daniel F. Burns Meet and Greet  
Women's History Month Art Contest  
Kindergarten Civic Engagement Unit  
Women's History Month Trivia Night

## APRIL

Eid al-Fitr  
Bike Bonanza  
Earth Month  
Charles River Clean Up  
Tree Plantings with CPS Students  
808 Memorial Drive Meet and Greet

## MAY

Citizenship Day  
Rise Up Cambridge Press Conference  
Voter Registration Ice Cream Social with CYC  
Pathway for Immigrant Workers Info Session

## JUNE

Eid al-Adha  
Glam Up & Go Pride Brunch  
2nd annual Juneteenth Parade  
Juneteenth City Hall Flag Raising  
Finch Apartments Meet and Greet



# Pushing Policy Priorities Forward

**// We want Cambridge to be a city where all families feel supported, seen, and hopeful for their children.**

MAYOR SIDDIQUI  
RISE UP CAMBRIDGE PRESS CONFERENCE,  
MAY 2023

I am thrilled to share with you the progress made with our policy priorities during this quarter. These initiatives reflect our shared commitment to creating a more equitable, sustainable, and inclusive Cambridge.

**Rise Up Cambridge:** Building on the success of the RISE pilot program, Rise Up Cambridge applications opened June 1st. This groundbreaking \$22 million expansion, the first of its kind in the country, will provide direct cash payments to low-income households with children, offering much-needed financial support. We received an incredible response with 1,000 applications submitted within the first 24 hours and families have already begun receiving payments.

**Universal Pre-Kindergarten:** Quality early childhood education is a priority for me and I am pleased to share that we are making significant progress with Universal Pre-K (UPK). City Manager Huang has established a \$10 million Universal Pre-K Stabilization Fund that will support the expansion of early childhood programs and ensure that every single child in Cambridge has access to quality pre-kindergarten education. This is a crucial step towards building a strong foundation for our children's future. We hope that UPK will result in increased retention and completion rates, elimination of education gaps (especially those emphasized by the pandemic), improved MCAS scores, and students performing at grade level.





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### **Building Energy Use Disclosure Ordinance**

**(BEUDO):** At the last City Council meeting in June, updates to the BEUDO ordinance passed and our commitment has never been stronger. This ordinance will play a crucial role in decarbonizing our buildings and achieving our zero emissions goals. By 2035, large commercial buildings in our city (which make up half of our emissions) have to be at zero emissions. I want to express my gratitude to the activists and building owners who have actively participated in shaping this important policy.

**Police Reform:** The City has continued to cooperate with the Middlesex District Attorney's Office as they conduct the investigation into the killing of 20-year-old Cambridge resident and Bangladeshi American college student, Arif Faisal. In the meantime, I have cosponsored three City Council Policy Orders that have been passed already, pertaining to a third-party investigator to review and examine the Cambridge Police Departments policies and practices regarding de-escalation methods, mental health calls for service, training, and more; The immediate implementation of a publicly-accessible traffic stop, arrest, and citation police data on a new Procedural Justice Dashboard; Increasing funding for mental health resources; and three requests that the Council has made for the Police Department to implement body cameras.

**Commonwealth Development Compact:** Collaboration is key to driving meaningful change, and recently, I joined mayors from Somerville, Lynn, and Salem in signing the

Commonwealth Development Compact. This compact incorporates a historic 25% Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion evaluation criteria in both public and private real estate development projects. Through this commitment, we are making significant strides towards improving representation, access, and equity in real estate development across the Area.



I was also excited to work on and see new initiatives move forward, continued planning for a fare free bus pilot with Boston for the #1 bus, and funding to support BAY-CASH, a program helping unhoused youth. These policy priorities reflect our shared values and aspirations for a better Cambridge. By addressing income inequality, advancing sustainability, expanding access to quality education, and promoting diversity and inclusion, we are building a stronger and more resilient community together.



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# School Committee Priorities



As Mayor, I also have the privilege of serving as the Chair of the School Committee. This role holds special significance for me because I am a proud product of Cambridge Public Schools and feel deeply connected to this community that shaped me. It is an honor to contribute to our educational system and ensure that every student has the opportunity to succeed.

June was a month filled with graduations! I had the pleasure of attending all five upper school graduations and conferring diplomas at the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School ceremony. It was beautiful to witness the outpouring of love and support from our community for each and every student. I wish them all the best as they embark on their next steps.

Before the graduation season began, I visited **14 school campuses** and engaged with 26 classrooms through story times, presentations, and more. One of the annual highlights is the kindergarten urban design unit, where kindergarteners across the district learn about the city design process. I

personally wrote a letter to these students, encouraging them to think about how we can make Cambridge an even better city. It was a joy to see their creativity as they followed the design process and created 3D models of their ideas. During my visits to the Martin Luther King Jr. and Cambridgeport schools in April, I was blown away by their models of additional cigarette disposal sites, a kindness robot, and a free farm-to-table restaurant equipped with composting toilets, solar panels, and a rainwater-powered kitchen. These young leaders continue to inspire me everyday, and I always cherish the time spent with them.



Last year, School Committee Members Ayesha Wilson and Fred Fantini and my office collaborated with the school district and Lesley University to initiate an **Early College Program**. Since then, we have since expanded to include the Benjamin Franklin Institute, and we are also working on adding an early education track to Lesley's course options. Early College programs like ours are proven to retain first-generation, immigrant, and students of color after their first year of

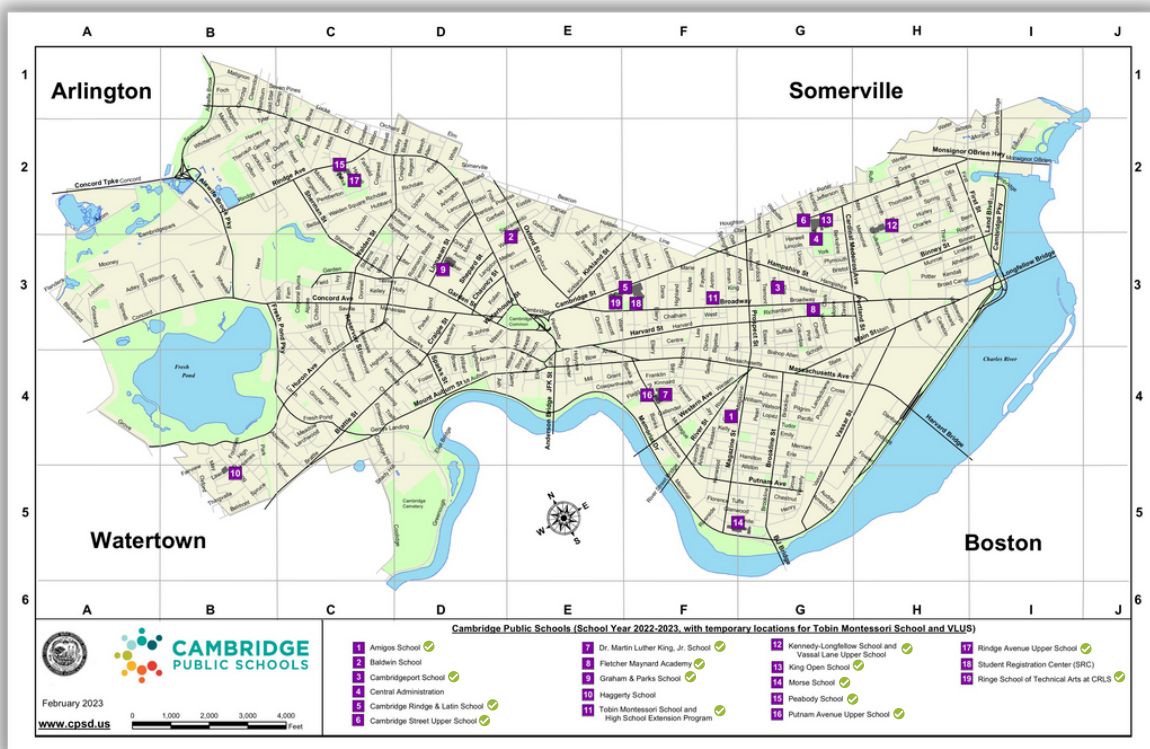


college allowing students to graduate college early and in less debt. Currently, over 100 students are taking advantage of this opportunity to earn college credits while fulfilling their high school graduation requirements.

I must also commend the **Cambridge Youth Council** and our **Student School Committee Representatives** for their exceptional leadership. Their efforts to register students to vote, advocate for the wider teaching of AP African American Studies courses, and create the Youth Headspace campaign, which aims to destigmatize conversations about mental health, have been truly instrumental in driving positive change within our community.

We are working diligently on **Cambridge Promise**, a partnership with the College Success Initiative, the Cambridge Public School District, School Committee Member Ayesha Wilson and Member Caroline Hunter, and the Cambridge Community Foundation. The first pilot year will provide eligible students free tuition at Bunker Hill Community College and a college success coach.

We are making significant progress in our priorities, ensuring that every student has access to quality education and opportunities for success. I am grateful for the dedication and support of the Cambridge community as we continue to work towards creating a brighter future for all students.



✓ School campuses visited this quarter

Since the start of my term in 2021, I have engaged with students at every public school in Cambridge.

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# Cambridge and Beyond

Cambridge continues to lead the way with progressive policies and an innovative mindset, and it is an honor to share our successes with leaders both nationally and internationally. Over the past quarter, I had the privilege of meeting with **foreign dignitaries** from El Salvador, Turkey, Canada, and Japan. In these meetings we exchanged ideas, collaborated on common challenges, and I was able to showcase the exceptional work happening in Cambridge.

I was thrilled to welcome **Governor Healey** and **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Deputy Administrator Janet McCabe** to Cambridge. They toured the Finch, a housing development that exemplifies the highest energy-efficiency and sustainability standards, including net zero carbon emissions. We then held a press conference to mark the state's participation in a program created by President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act to address climate change. This collaboration demonstrates our collective commitment with the state to **tackling climate change** and building a more sustainable future.

An exciting highlight was attending the **Tribeca Film Festival** in New York City for the premiere of "It's Basic," a documentary that explores the history of Guaranteed Basic Income in America. The film, put together by Michael Tubbs and Blowback Productions, features Cambridge and our RISE pilot and expansion. Representing Cambridge and our

ongoing efforts to address income inequality on the big screen was pretty cool.

In terms of conferences, I attended the **National League of Cities (NLC)** Congressional City Conference in Washington DC to discuss how we can collectively build a brighter future. During the conference, I had the chance to connect with Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley and Representative Jim McGovern. It was particularly meaningful for me as I realized that exactly 20 years ago, I attended my first NLC conference as a founding member of the Cambridge Youth Council. Little did I know then that I would return 20 years later as the Mayor, alongside the current Youth Council Members.

I also attended the **National School Boards Association Cube Conference** with the School Committee in Orlando, Florida, where we shared our strategies for addressing educational challenges and learned from other school boards across the nation. These conferences have been invaluable in enhancing our collective efforts to ensure quality education for all.

Through these interactions and engagements, we continue to amplify Cambridge's achievements, share our innovative approaches, and learn from communities worldwide.





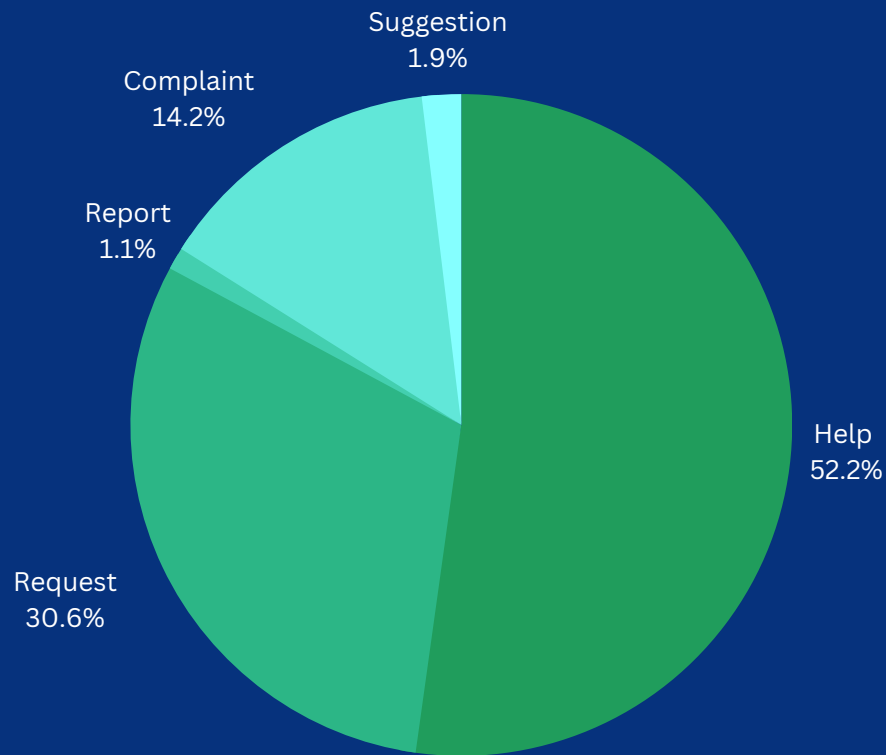
## Providing Constituent Services

My goal is for all residents to feel as though City Hall and the Mayor's Office is a space for them. This looks like fostering consistent dialogue and connecting them to resources and agencies they can lean on in the future. Since my term began, my office has received 3,654 inquiries from residents, 1,444 inquiries have been during this quarter. Residents get in touch with our office via phone, email, social media, walking in, or attending office sponsored events like Coffee Hours and Meet and Greet at Cambridge Housing Authority buildings.

A vast number of the inquiries received were regarding immigration. Luckily our Director of Constituent Services has experience in this space and we have a great relationship with Senator Warren's Office to provide support for residents who need help dealing with Federal Agencies. Most recently we were able to help a resident who had missed their Oath ceremony to reschedule. They became a US

citizen on June 15! We also have hosted two Pathway for Immigrant Worker training and Cambridge's First Citizenship Day event where over 40 attendees applied for citizenship.

Other inquiry themes that have risen include housing, financial support, requests to meet with me or my Director of Constituent Services, and public safety. Though a majority of inquiries have been resolved internally, my office has continued to work closely with city departments and other agencies to help residents get the assistance they need: Cambridge Housing Authority for housing needs, the Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee for help with bill payments, the City Manager's Office and his departments for executive decisions, and Senator Warren and Congresswoman Pressley's Offices for support dealing with state and federal agencies regarding immigration or emergency travel requests.



# 1,444

Inquiries this quarter from residents who get in touch with our office via phone, email, social media, or walk-in.

**3,654 inquiries in the full term.**





There is so much to be proud of, Cambridge!

From launching the first guaranteed income program of its kind in the country, to our steadfast commitment to addressing achievement gaps in our public schools, we have demonstrated our dedication to progress.

I am proud to lead a community that continues to push boundaries, celebrate innovation, and create positive change. With the support of our residents, city staff, and community partners, we have achieved so much and I cannot wait to see what is in store in the next six months.

Thank you for taking time to read my third quarter review. If you have ideas, suggestions, or concerns, you can always contact my office in any of the following ways:

**Phone:** 617-349-4321

**Email:** [Mayor@cambridgema.gov](mailto:Mayor@cambridgema.gov)

**Newsletter:** [bit.ly/MayorSumbulSiddiqui](https://bit.ly/MayorSumbulSiddiqui)

**Social media:** @mayorsiddiqui

