



YI-AN HUANG
City Manager

City of Cambridge

Executive Department

CMA 2025 #104
IN CITY COUNCIL
April 28, 2025

To the Honorable, the City Council:

Please find attached a memorandum regarding Awaiting Report #25-09 on how the Cambridge Department of Transportation can advance protection of Cambridge students and other bus riders from the Commissioner of the Cambridge Department of Transportation, Brooke McKenna.

Very truly yours,

Yi-An Huang
City Manager





To: Yi-An Huang, City Manager
From: Brooke McKenna, Commissioner
Date: April 24, 2025
Subject: Awaiting Report 2025-9

In response to Awaiting Report 25-9 requesting that the City Manager confer with the relevant departments about exploring how the Transportation Department can advance protection of Cambridge students and other bus riders as authorized by the two new Massachusetts laws, we report the following:

Background

Automated enforcement is a new and important way that the City can improve traffic safety for students, accessibility for people with disabilities, and the safe and efficient operation of streets in Cambridge. Two laws passed by the state legislature have changed the regulatory landscape for automated enforcement of traffic regulations around stopping for school buses and blocking of bus lanes and bus stops.

Stopping for School Buses Automated Enforcement

Through Chapter 399 of the Acts of 2024, the state legislature amended Chapters 40 and 90 of the Massachusetts General Laws (M.G.L.). This allows for automated enforcement of violations for overtaking or failing to stop for a stopped school bus. Fines and penalties for passing a school bus with an extended “stop” arm did not change with this law. They remain the same and are: \$250 for a first offence, \$500 for a second offence, \$1000 for a third offence, and revocation of a driver’s license after a fourth offence.

Pursuant to the amendments, the City would need to accept the provisions of the law, and the Cambridge Public School District, through the School Committee, would need to consent to the program. The Department will begin discussions with the School Department on this issue.

Bus Lane and Bus Stop Automated Enforcement

Transportation Department staff are coordinating with relevant departments and state agencies to advance implementation of automated bus lane and bus stop enforcement.

Chapter 363 of the Acts of 2024¹ created M.G.L. Chapter (c.) 90K to allow automated enforcement of bus stops and bus lanes:

- By expansion of M.G.L. c. 89, parking and standing in a bus-only lane are now prohibited by state law: “No motor vehicle shall be parked, stood or caused to stand in a lane designated for the exclusive use of buses unless otherwise regulated or posted by an official traffic signal, sign or marking or at the direction of an authorized police officer.” M.G.L. c. 89, § 4E.

¹ <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2024/Chapter363>

- Chapter 90K authorizes automated camera enforcement of bus stops and bus lanes by the MBTA, Regional Transit Authorities, and municipalities

The new law allows for bus-mounted cameras to enforce against stopping in bus lanes and bus stops as well as sidewalk pole-mounted cameras to enforce against stopping at bus stops. The MBTA is the enforcement authority for all automated enforcement via bus-mounted camera, and is authorized to operate throughout their service area, independent of municipal boundaries. Automated enforcement of stopping in bus stops with pole-mounted cameras can be done by local municipalities or a municipality can delegate its authority to a third party, such as the MBTA.

Fines and penalties for stopping in a bus lane allow a range from \$25 to \$125. They can be differentiated between passenger and commercial plates. Fines and penalties for stopping in a bus stop are \$100. The owner of the vehicle is responsible for the fine, regardless of who is operating the vehicle, with the exception of vehicles that have been reported as stolen.

The current law does not allow for the enforcement of moving violations for driving in a bus lane. This may change at some point in the future, and planning for the current program is taking this into account to ensure a seamless transition if the law is changed to allow moving violations.

Revenue

The fines for the bus lane and bus stop automated enforcement systems can only be used for the costs to operate the system. This means the costs of the equipment and, if contracted services are used to verify a violation, the value of that contracted service. All excess revenue above and beyond the administrative costs to operate the system must go to the Massachusetts Transportation Trust Fund.

Next Steps

- The MBTA is drafting new statewide regulations for automated enforcement of illegal stopping in bus lanes or bus stops.
- City and MBTA staff are exploring a potential program to allow the MBTA, through a contractor, to install automated enforcement devices at bus stops. This would be in place of a city-owned program and requires further investigation and discussion.
- The MBTA has issued an RFI to learn more about market-based enforcement solutions and potential vendors.
- The MBTA anticipates issuing an RFP for the program later this year.
- Transportation Department staff are meeting with the MBTA staff on a regular basis to coordinate next steps. In these meetings, MBTA staff have indicated that they believe they can conclude the regulation-making process this year and begin installation of on-bus automated enforcement systems on some limited bus routes soon thereafter.