

Special City Council meeting in response to the murder of Xavier Bautista

Call of the Meeting: The City Council shall hold a Special Meeting to receive updates on and discuss the City of Cambridge's current, planned, and recommended public safety and violence prevention work on Thursday, July 23, at 5:30pm in the Sullivan Chamber, Second Floor, City Hall.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

- I. Public Comment
- II. Opening Remarks from the Mayor
- III. Communications from the City Manager
- IV. Council Discussion
 - a. Council discussion following staff updates, including discussion on the use of technology in public safety initiatives.
- V. Policy Orders and Resolutions
- VI. Adjournment

COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY OFFICERS

1. A communication has been received from Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui transmitting the Agenda for the Special City Council Meeting on July 23, 2026. (COF26#102) [text of report]

CITY MANAGER'S AGENDA

1. A communication transmitted from Yi-An Huang, City Manager, relative to the City's violence prevention efforts. (CM26#207) [[text of report](#)]
2. A communication transmitted from Yi-An Huang, City Manager, relative to a Community Safety Department update. (CM26#208) [[text of report](#)]
3. A communication transmitted from Yi-An Huang, City Manager, relative to a report on 2026 Summer Community Programs. (CM26#209) [[text of report](#)]
4. A communication transmitted from Yi-An Huang, City Manager, relative to a Violence Prevention Recommendations Report from the Community Safety Department. (CM26#26) [[text of report](#)] (Feb 5, 2026)]

ORDERS

1. That the City Manager is requested to take all necessary steps to temporarily restore and reactivate ShotSpotter within the areas of Cambridge previously covered by the system. Councillor Simmons, Councillor Flaherty (PO26#136)
2. That the City Manager is hereby requested to report on progress of the February 2026 report's recommendations, and plans for ensuring appropriate levels of support and staffing for the Community Safety Department, including continued expansion of CSD's violence prevention program, the number and types of calls handled by the CARE team, and the timeline for more comprehensive staffing for the CARE team emergency response program and is requested to report back to the City Council in a timely manner.

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, Mayor Siddiqui, Councillor Nolan (PO26#137)

3. That the City Manager is requested to provide a comprehensive evaluation of violence response and prevention strategies, along with survivor support services, across City departments including CPD, CSD, CHA, and DHSP and come with recommendations before the City Council's Public Safety Committee and report back to the City Council in a timely manner. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, Councillor McGovern, Councillor Al-Zubi (PO26#138)

TEXT OF ORDERS

O-1 July 23, 2026

COUNCILLOR SIMMONS

COUNCILLOR FLAHERTY

WHEREAS: The City of Cambridge utilized ShotSpotter gunfire-detection technology beginning in 2014 as one component of the City's response to incidents of suspected gunfire, particularly in circumstances in which no resident or witness called 911 to report that shots had been fired; and

WHEREAS: On May 18, 2026, the Cambridge City Council voted to discontinue the City's use of ShotSpotter gunfire-detection technology following concerns raised about its effectiveness, privacy implications, and impact upon the community; and

WHEREAS: The tragic fatal shooting that occurred in Cambridge during the early morning hours of July 4, 2026 has renewed concern regarding the City's ability to identify and respond promptly to incidents of gunfire that are not reported through a 911 call; and

WHEREAS: In the days following this tragedy, residents have expressed significant concern regarding the discontinuation of ShotSpotter and whether the voices of those living in neighborhoods most affected by gun violence were sufficiently heard and considered before the technology was removed; and

WHEREAS: The City Council must take seriously both the concerns raised regarding ShotSpotter and the concerns of residents who believe the technology may have provided an added layer of protection, particularly in circumstances in which gunfire might otherwise go unreported; and

WHEREAS: No single technology can prevent gun violence or substitute for sustained investments in violence prevention, youth engagement, community outreach, trauma-informed services, effective policing, and neighborhood safety, but an existing public safety measure should not be removed without a clear understanding of whether residents wish to retain it and what additional or alternative protections will take its place; now therefore be it

WHEREAS: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to take all necessary steps to temporarily restore

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and reactivate ShotSpotter within the areas of Cambridge previously covered by the system; and be it further
ORDERED: That ShotSpotter remain in operation until the City has completed a robust and inclusive public process regarding its continued use, with particular attention given to the views of residents from neighborhoods most affected by gun violence, and until the City has developed and begun implementing additional or alternative measures to ensure that those neighborhoods are not left with fewer layers of public safety protection; and be it further

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to develop and present to the City Council a comprehensive neighborhood safety and gun violence prevention plan identifying the measures the City will employ to detect and respond to unreported gunfire, prevent violence, support affected residents and families, and provide additional protections within communities facing the greatest risk of gun violence; and be it further

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to report back to the City Council within ninety days with the results of the public process, the proposed neighborhood safety and gun violence prevention plan, and recommendations regarding the continued use, modification, or replacement of ShotSpotter.

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COUNCILLOR SOBRINHO-WHEELER

MAYOR SIDDIQUI

COUNCILLOR NOLAN

WHEREAS: In 2023, the City of Cambridge established the Community Safety Department, which includes the Community Assistance Response and Engagement (CARE) team for emergency crisis response, case management supports, and violence prevention efforts; and

WHEREAS: Since that time, the Community Safety Department has become a critical part of the City's public safety resources and response, alongside the Cambridge Police Department, the Emergency Communications Department, the Multi-Service Center, the Department of Human Services Programs, and other City departments.; and

WHEREAS: Violence interrupters and [violence prevention programs](#) such as those used by Community Safety Department have been deployed as one method to reduce gun violence in cities across the country, and their [effectiveness has been noted consistently](#) in reducing gun violence; and

WHEREAS: The Community Safety Department's violence prevention work has included [partnering with community organizations](#) including Cambridge HEART, Community Conversations: Sister to Sister, My Brother's Keeper, InnerCity Weightlifting, and On the Rise based in Cambridge on violence prevention services; and

WHEREAS: The Community Safety Department's CARE team was launched in 2024 and provides crisis intervention and ongoing case management services and had responded to more than 1,200 crisis calls by the end of 2025; and

WHEREAS: While the Community Safety Department's CARE team is eligible to respond to a range of 911 calls for crisis response and ongoing case management, recent reporting [highlighted](#) that the team is eligible to respond to more than twice as many 911 calls as it is currently being dispatched to; and

WHEREAS: While the Community Safety Department's CARE team has expanded their hours since launching in 2024, the team is currently staffed only for Monday to Friday from 7am to 7pm, which is less than half of all hours, and the City has not yet outlined a goal timeline for the team to expand beyond these staffing levels or for 24/7 crisis response; and

WHEREAS: In February 2026, the City submitted a violence prevention recommendations report to the Council outlining the following recommendations:

1. That the Community Safety Department work with Cambridge-based organizations to expand coverage, services, and evaluation of effectiveness;
2. That the Community Safety Department establish a case management service for individuals most likely to be involved in gun violence;
3. That the City revise the RFP process currently used to partner with organizations on violence prevention; and
4. That the City hire an Assistant Director of Violence Prevention to oversee violence prevention programming, which the City has since done; now therefore be it

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and is hereby requested to report on progress on the February 2026 report's recommendations, and plans for ensuring appropriate levels of support and staffing for the Community Safety Department, including continued expansion of CSD's violence prevention program, the number and types of calls handled by the CARE team, and the timeline for more comprehensive staffing for the CARE team emergency response program; and be it further

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to report back to the City Council in a timely manner.

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COUNCILLOR SOBRINHO-WHEELER

COUNCILLOR MCGOVERN

COUNCILLOR AL-ZUBI

WHEREAS: While Cambridge has had significantly [fewer homicides per capita than the national average](#) in [recent years](#), including [among cities in Massachusetts](#), when violence does occur it is devastating and unacceptable; and
WHEREAS: Along with state and federal policies related to public safety and firearms, the public safety work and

programming run by the City of Cambridge including by the Police Department, the Department of Human Services Programs, the Community Safety Department, the Housing Department, the Multi-Service Center, the Public Health Department, and the Cambridge Health Alliance have had significant impacts in preventing and responding to violence in Cambridge; and

WHEREAS: It is imperative for the City to holistically evaluate what methods have and have not been successful in responding to violence in order to strengthen policy making around public safety across City departments; and

WHEREAS: Cambridge's current public safety policies include a Surveillance Technology Ordinance passed by the City Council that authorizes the City to use more than 30 different surveillance technologies, including more than a dozen surveillance technologies requested by the Police Department over the years; and

WHEREAS: Alongside these important traditional public safety responses, City and community resources including [mental and behavioral healthcare](#), [affordable housing](#), [education](#), and [job training programs](#) have proven to be critical tools in reducing violence in cities across the country; and

WHEREAS: While these public safety resources across City departments have been critical, it is important to review which programs, policies, and technologies have worked and have not worked in preventing and responding to violent crime, including solved and unsolved murders in Cambridge, and what additional resources or changes would be impactful across City departments; and

WHEREAS: Community engagement is critical in advancing public safety and new approaches or adoption of technologies must begin with robust community engagement and outreach to communities impacted prior to adoption in order to be effective; and

WHEREAS: While City departments and community organizations such as Transition House, Remembering Our Cambridge Kids and Kin, and BARCC have done tremendous work to support survivors of violence and their families in Cambridge, there remains work to be done to ensure that survivors and their families have the resources and support they need; now therefore be it

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and is hereby requested to provide a comprehensive evaluation of violence response and prevention strategies, along with survivor support services, across City departments including CPD, CSD, CHA, and DHSP and come with recommendations before the City Council's Public Safety Committee; and be it further

ORDERED: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to report back to the City Council in a timely manner.