



# City of Cambridge

## Executive Department

**YI-AN HUANG**  
City Manager

CMA 2025 #210  
**IN CITY COUNCIL**  
August 4, 2025

To the Honorable, the City Council:

Please find attached communication from Megan Bayer, City Solicitor, relative to Awaiting Report Item Number 25-35, regarding a request that the City Manager explore and establish a City of Cambridge Electronic Records Archiving Policy.

Very truly yours,

Yi-An Huang  
City Manager



Megan B. Bayer  
City Solicitor

Elliott J. Veloso  
Deputy City Solicitor

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First Assistant City Solicitor



## CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

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August 4, 2025

Yi-An Huang  
City Manager  
Cambridge City Hall  
795 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02139

**Re: Response to AR-25-35, Policy Order 2025 #85, of June 9, 2025, that the City Manager explore and establish a City of Cambridge Electronic Records Archiving Policy.**

Dear Mr. Huang:

I write in response to the above-referenced Council Order of June 9, 2025, which requests the City Manager: "... to work with the City Clerk, the Information Technology Department, the Law Department, and any other relevant departments to draft an ordinance establishing the City of Cambridge Electronic Records Archiving Policy." Additionally, the Council Order requests the City Manager "to report back to the City Council with a proposed ordinance and implementation timeline no later than September 8, 2025."

This memorandum will provide an overview of the current steps taken to explore and implement an electronic records archiving policy.

Since January 2025, the City Manager's Office, City Clerk's Office, the Information Technology Department, and the Law Department have met regularly to discuss how best to address the City's records retention generally, and specifically the City's electronic records. After extensive review, it is not recommended that the digitization and archiving of the City's records be mandated by an ordinance, given that records retention and digital archiving are continually evolving areas requiring flexibility. Massachusetts laws, regulations, and directives from the Secretary of the Commonwealth's Office pertaining to public records and municipal records retention are constantly evolving, and an ordinance would likely frequently find itself obsolete or in conflict with changing state requirements. Addressing the City's digitization and electronic archiving goals through policy allows the City to more readily adapt to these changes and evolving needs.

Based on this assessment, the City has developed a draft digital preservation and electronic records archiving policy which attempts to align industry best practices and procedures with the needs of the Information Technology Department to ensure compliance with state and municipal retention requirements. The policy currently envisions that permanent digital records will be preserved and migrated to updated formats as necessary. The policy intends to govern the scanning and digital retention of records identified as permanent in the State's Municipal Records Retention Schedule. The draft policy establishes operational frameworks for long-term preservation, ensuring the authenticity, integrity, and chain of custody of official City records. The policy also addresses balancing public access and transparency with the protection of sensitive information. Once the policy is finalized, it will be implemented with all City departments.

Staff discussions highlighted the importance of assessing the potential impacts record digitization would have on City departments. To that end, the City plans to circulate a questionnaire to all City departments which aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of the types of records retained and their formats. The information collected will help guide efforts to improve record management and retention, with a focus on reducing operational costs and storage volume through digitization, ensuring proper classification and retention, and facilitating easier access of electronic records by staff and the public. The Information Technology Department plans to distribute the questionnaire in the coming weeks. After the results are gathered, they will be assessed to determine if the draft policy should be revised to address department needs and concerns. The results of the questionnaire will also guide the potential training and resources needed to assist departments to comply with any digital preservation and electronic records archiving policies implemented. The City will update the City Council as the policies and plans for implementation are finalized.

Very truly yours,



Megan B. Bayer  
City Solicitor