



City of Cambridge

Executive Department

YI-AN HUANG
City Manager

CMA 2026-276
IN CITY COUNCIL
September 28, 2026

To the Honorable, the City Council:

Please see the attached memo conveying a response from Brooke McKenna, Commissioner, Department of Transportation, to Awaiting Report #26-26 regarding harmonization of institutional bus protocols.

Very truly yours,

Yi-An Huang
City Manager





To: Yi-An Huang, City Manager
From: Brooke McKenna, Commissioner
Date: Thursday, September 10, 2026
Subject: Awaiting Report 2026-26

In response to Awaiting Report 2026-26, in which, the City Manager is requested to direct the Community Development Department and the Transportation Department to meet with Harvard's Office of Community Relations and the Longwood Collective (MASCO) to harmonize institutional bus protocols with public-facing commitments, we report the following.

Report from meetings with Harvard University

The Cambridge Department of Transportation (CDOT) met with Harvard University during the summer. During the meeting, staff discussed the difficulties reported by Cambridge community members when trying to use Harvard's Campus Shuttles, where information about the shuttles is posted, the Campus Shuttle's new real-time tracking information, and the Citywide Shuttle + Transit Gap Study.

Based on our conversations, Harvard University committed to:

- Reconfirm with shuttle drivers regularly and consistently Harvard's policy allowing community members to board the campus shuttle through the regular, ongoing shuttle driver training program
- Posting on the Harvard Shuttle website boarding requirements for community members
- Participating in the stakeholder group for the Citywide Shuttle + Transit Gap study—with one aim to identify ways to make it clearer to community members they can use the Harvard campus shuttles

In addition, Harvard staff shared information about CityMapper, their new real-time shuttle arrival information platform. CityMapper is a smartphone application that provides transportation information to the public including MBTA services, local shuttles, Bluebikes bike share, and transportation network companies. Members of the public can see the live, real-time arrivals for the different Harvard Shuttles through this free-to-use smartphone application.

Report from communications with Longwood Collective

CDOT staff corresponded with staff from the Longwood Collective, formerly known as the Medical Academic and Scientific Community Organization (MASCO). The Longwood Collective is a member-based organization that is led by a Board of Directors from the member institutions. Member institutions include, among others, Harvard Medical School, the five Colleges of the Fenway, Harvard University, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, and the hospitals.

Longwood Collective staff shared the following updates on their plans and efforts to improve ticketing and service. The M2 currently requires that riders either show an ID from affiliated institution or that riders purchase a physical ticket to board. Community members can visit the City Clerk's office in City Hall to purchase tickets from the M2 route. The Longwood Collective reports that they are in early stages of planning for digital fare payment on the M2 shuttle route with member institutions. This early work is expected to last at least 12 months and focus on discussions on operating requirements for digital fare payment. At this time,



they indicated they are not planning to change the ticketing requirements for community members. In addition, Longwood Collective staff reported on recent vehicle upgrades to automated vehicle location technology. This means that current M2 riders receive more accurate, real-time shuttle arrival information.

Finally, the Longwood Collective reported on their efforts to champion the “Science Corridor” study earmark in this year’s state budget. The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) will lead this study focusing on bus rapid transit connections between the Longwood area, Allston-Brighton, and Cambridge. They look forward to participating in this MassDOT study.

Updates to City Communications

The City’s “Getting Around Cambridge by Transit” page has been updated with a new “Shuttles Open to the Public” section with service and fare information and links real-time tracking webpages, where available, to the following open-door shuttles:

- Harvard Campus Shuttles
- Longwood Collective M2
- EZRide / Charles River TMA
- Alewife Loop / Alewife TMA

Additionally, CDOT staff are preparing community engagement materials to inform community members about shuttles open to the public. The topics will include fare, service, and real-time/app information for all shuttles open to the public. We expect to distribute informational flyers at upcoming community events in Fall 2026 and in upcoming e-mail newsletters like the Daily Update and Transportation Monthly newsletters.

Relationship to Citywide Shuttle + Transit Gap Study

The “Citywide Shuttle + Transit Gap Study” will convene stakeholder meetings with shuttle operators in Cambridge—including those that are open to the public, like EZRide, Harvard Shuttle, and Longwood Collective M2. One outcome of the study will be recommendations to improve how the City and shuttle operators communicate to Cambridge community members about shuttles open to the public. We hope to explore informational and branding opportunities with shuttle operators to make clear when community members can use private shuttles.