



City of Cambridge

Executive Department

YI-AN HUANG
City Manager

CMA 2025 #263
IN CITY COUNCIL
October 27, 2025

To the Honorable, the City Council:

I am hereby requesting an appropriation in the amount of \$20,000,000, from Free Cash to the General Fund Employee Benefits Department Salary and Wages account, which will replenish funds that were transferred out of the Employee Benefits Department and subsequently used to fund expenses related to the demolition of 221 Mount Auburn Street.

In 2023, significant structural deficiencies were uncovered at the nine-story Riverview Condominiums at 221 Mount Auburn Street. Engineers, conducting exploratory work for roof and drainage repairs, discovered that the building was not constructed according to its original design. The Riverview-in-Cambridge Condominium Trust (Condo Trust) subsequently hired SGH, Inc. to assess the concrete slabs. Through visual observations, drone photography, non-destructive testing, and examinations at exploratory openings, SGH, Inc. identified critical issues, which were found to be widespread throughout the building:

- **Low Reinforcement:** Steel reinforcement was placed lower than specified in the design drawings.
- **Low Concrete Compressive Strength:** The concrete's strength was lower than required.
- **Utility Penetrations:** The concrete slabs had penetrations and alterations that were not part of the original design.

The City's primary objective in this involvement was and is to protect public health and safety. As outlined to the City Council on July 23, 2025, the City is moving urgently to demolish the building. The initial \$20,000,000 transfer was critical in order to proceed with contracts for a structural engineering consultant, an environmental consultant, and a demolition contractor.

Ultimately, it is anticipated the City of Cambridge will recover the costs associated with the demolition of the Riverview Condominiums, including interest and any collection fees, directly from the property owners. This action is authorized by Massachusetts General Law (MGL) Chapter 143, Section 9 and Chapter 139, Section 3A, which empower municipalities to collect expenses incurred in addressing public health or safety nuisances and hazards.



Following the completion of the demolition, the City will issue bills to all the unit owners with their pro-rata share of the cost. Additionally, a statement of claim will be filed at the Middlesex South Registry of Deeds, placing a lien on the properties. Any charges that remain unpaid at the time of the FY27 tax billing (fall 2026), will be added to the real estate tax bills of each condominium. Once added, these charges will be collected as part of the regular tax bill.

The City's Free Cash balance as of June 30, 2025, was certified by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue on October 1, 2025, in the amount of \$184,251,490

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Yi-An Huang". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Yi-An Huang
City Manager