



# City of Cambridge

## Executive Department

**YI-AN HUANG**  
City Manager

CMA 2025 #271  
**IN CITY COUNCIL**  
November 3, 2025

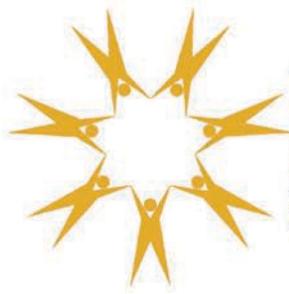
To the Honorable, the City Council:

Please find attached a response to Awaiting Report #25-62 relative to a plan for the utilization of the Russell Youth and Community Center from Assistant City Manager for Human Services, Ellen Semonoff.

Very truly yours,

Yi-An Huang  
City Manager





Department of  
Human Service Programs

*Ellen Semonoff, Assistant City Manager*

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October 27, 2025

To: Yi-An Huang, City Manager

From: Ellen Semonoff, Assistant City Manager for Human Services

Re: Expanded use of Russell Youth and Community Center

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In an effort to respond to requests from older residents in West Cambridge to use the Russell Youth and Community Center during times when youth programs are not operating, the Department of Human Service Programs (DHSP) will be launching a pilot program to offer Council on Aging (COA) classes at the Center. The pilot program, open to Cambridge residents ages 60 and older, will operate on Thursdays and Fridays from November 6, 2025 through January 16, 2026. During the pilot, the Russell Youth and Community Center (680 Huron Ave.) will be staffed and open from 9 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. for older adults to participate in a selection of classes offered by COA and to enjoy the building's common area.

COA, Cambridge Youth Programs (CYP), and Recreation staff have worked to craft a schedule that allows use of the building on Thursday and Friday mornings for a variety of classes and activities for older adults. This extension of COA programming to West Cambridge increases opportunities for more residents who are 60 and older to enjoy some of COA's most popular offerings, including yoga, Tai Chi, and Portrait Drawing.

This extended programming will be coupled with targeted neighborhood outreach this fall to assess the kinds of activities, programs, and lectures that are of interest to older adults who live in this area of Cambridge. Based on feedback, COA will work to offer programs in the space that will meet the needs of the broadest group of older adults and will explore ideas for intergenerational programming with CYP. We are also in the process of repairing equipment in the weight room and plan to make that available for use by older adults during designated COA programming hours in early 2026.

As with all public buildings in the city, including the other two Senior Centers, staff must be in the building for residents to be present, and not all parts of the building will be open to the public.

The success of the pilot will be measured by the number of Cambridge residents age 60 and older who register for classes and use the building. After six months, staff will evaluate usage and satisfaction with the program.

The mission of the Cambridge Council on Aging is to promote and safeguard the health and independence of older adults in Cambridge through opportunities that support lifelong learning, healthy aging and connection. Across the Cambridge Senior Center (806 Massachusetts Ave.) and North Cambridge Senior Center (2050 Massachusetts Ave.), there are more than 6,000 visits and close to 1,000 older adults served per month. We look forward to fostering connection and enjoyment for additional older adults in the Cambridge community through this pilot program.