



City of Cambridge

Executive Department

YI-AN HUANG
City Manager

CMA 2025 #280
IN CITY COUNCIL
November 24, 2025

To the Honorable, the City Council:

I am hereby requesting an appropriation, in the amount of \$1,000,000, from Free Cash to the Public Investment Fund Public Works Department Extraordinary Expenditures account. These funds will support the removal of stockpiled contaminated soil and initiate the design phase for the remediation and reconstruction of Gold Star Mothers Park.

During reconstruction of the basketball court, crews uncovered buried fill material-including ash, brick, concrete, and other debris-beneath the surface. To assess the potential risk and facilitate off-site disposal, the City's environmental consultant collected soil samples and submitted them to a certified laboratory for comprehensive analysis. Tests included screening for metals (e.g., lead, arsenic), industrial chemicals (e.g., PCBs), hydrocarbons (e.g., oil and grease), and general soil chemistry indicators. Initial results revealed elevated levels of certain contaminants, prompting an expanded investigation across the park. A total of 165 locations were sampled using a systematic grid approach at varying depths to determine the extent and severity of contamination.

Because certain specific locations of the park showed elevated levels of certain contaminants the park has been fenced off and formal notifications have been sent to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) for review and approval.

The funds are required to safely remove contaminated soil stockpiled during the basketball court renovation, and to retain an engineering and park design consultant. The consultant will develop specifications for proper soil disposal and site remediation and prepare design documents for the full reconstruction of Gold Star Mothers Park following remediation. Once regulatory approvals are secured, onsite cleanup is anticipated to begin in 2026 or 2027. The City will also explore steps to install protective measures over portions of the park in the hopes of reopening these areas to the public more quickly, prior to full reconstruction of the park.

As of November 24, 2025, the Free Cash balance is \$157,045,990.

Very truly yours,

Yi-An Huang
City Manager

