

March 18, 2026

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS SUBCOMMITTEE

**Virtual Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee Report
Monday, March 18, 2026 at 5:30 p.m.
Broadcast from the Media Studio
454 Broadway, Cambridge, MA**

Called for the purpose of a brief update on 158 Spring Street and on efforts to improve transportation efficiencies.

Subcommittee Members Present: Member Jaikumar,(Chair), Member Hudson, Mayor Siddiqui

Other Members Present: Member de Paula Santos

Others Present: Tina Fisher, Director of Transportation; Vedad Konjic, Director of Facilities; Lee McCanne, Chief Information Officer; David Murphy, Superintendent of Schools; Maggie Rabidou, Operations Manager; Damon Smith, Chief Operating Officer

Chair Jaikumar started the meeting at 5:30 p.m. and read the call of the meeting.

Chair Jaikumar turned the meeting over to Superintendent Murphy, who presented updates on the 158 Spring Street building. The presentation can be found on this [website](#).

Mr. Murphy shared that the building, formerly the Kennedy Longfellow School, is a significant district asset with capacity for over 650 students and is located in an area with a high concentration of school-age children. He noted that decisions regarding its future use will have long-term implications and must consider financial constraints, capital planning, and district needs.

Chair Jaikumar opened the floor for public comment. Given the time constraints, each speaker was allotted three minutes. The following caregivers and community members, Anne Coburn and Jess Goetz, shared the following sentiments:

- Concerns regarding the financial feasibility of bringing the building up to code and questions about the timeline for decision-making
- Concerns about the condition of the building and the need for a transparent and inclusive community engagement process
- Questions about how programming decisions will be made and how they will impact the district overall

Chair Jaikumar turned the meeting over to COO Damon Smith for a presentation on transportation. The presentation can be found on this [website](#).

Mr. Smith presented updates on transportation improvements, including GPS tracking tools, route optimization, and system restructuring. Highlights included:

- Encouraging families to use GPS tracking tools such as Athena and Beacon to improve communication and reliability
- Transitioning from a three-tier to a two-tier transportation system to improve efficiency and on-time performance
- Use of data and software to identify inefficiencies and improve routing

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Mr. Smith provided a detailed example of the AM Rainbow Route, identifying delays and opportunities for improvement. Proposed changes include consolidating stops and adjusting routes to reduce delays. These changes would impact over 100 students in both morning and afternoon routes, with a pilot program planned for May and June. Operations Manager Maggie Rabidou provided additional insights into the transportation improvements and the use of new software. She emphasized the importance of data collection and the ability to identify and address pain points in bus routes. **Member Hudson** praised the detailed presentation and the focus on delivering reliable and inclusive transportation services. She highlighted the need for a balance between convenience and reliability in transportation decisions. **Member Hudson** highlighted the trade-offs of transportation, noting that closer pickup locations increase traffic and other logistical challenges. She asked for clarity on trade-offs, such as whether they prefer closer but less reliable pickups or slightly farther but more reliable ones. Mr. Smith appreciated the feedback and emphasizes the need for community input on how comfortable they are with walking to stops, especially in adverse weather conditions. He mentioned the pilot program starting in May and June, which will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the new system in various weather conditions.

Mr. Smith emphasized that centralized stops can improve student safety through increased supervision, while acknowledging challenges such as narrow streets and driveways. He noted the need for community input on safe pickup locations to reduce congestion and support efficient routing. The pilot program, beginning after April break, will include community engagement and safety assessments, with the goal of improving traffic flow and on-time arrival. Feedback gathered will help inform future decisions, including potential expansion to areas such as North Point and Cambridge Street.

Chair Jaikumar focused discussion on the pilot program and its impact on traffic patterns. Mr. Smith confirmed that community engagement has not yet begun but will start soon. **Chair Jaikumar** inquired about timelines and potential district-wide implementation. **Member de Paula Santos** reflected on the program's potential impact on traffic and expressed optimism about its outcomes.

Chair Jaikumar adjourned the meeting at 7:01 p.m.