

From: Elena Saporta

Sent: Tuesday, April 23, 2019 12:35 AM

To: Woodbury, Catherine <cwoodbury@cambridgema.gov>

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Subject: UFMP/TF - Reflections

Dear Commissioner O'Riordan, Catherine Woodbury, the Urban Forestry Master Plan Consultant team and fellow members of the Urban Forestry Masterplan Task Force:

It's hard to believe that it has been almost a year since the UFMP task force first met.

For those of us who are truly passionate about trees, it has been a sincere pleasure to be around so many like-minded people and a real privilege to have worked with a veritable dream team of consultants!

With the final official task force gathering taking place later this week, I wanted to share with you some of my personal thoughts and reflections from the past year. It is my hope that a number of the following observations and suggestions can be touched upon in the final report.

Much of the past year's analysis of Cambridge's tree canopy has been at a very 'high level,' i.e. viewed from above with a significant emphasis on data collection and presentation. This letter is an attempt to zoom in a bit and to examine several ground level conditions that play into the UFMP Task Force's overall 'SLIC' mission (Stem Loss/ Increase Canopy). Topics covered in this letter fall into the following three broad categories: 1. Avoidable Practices, 2. Urban Forestry and Parks Management and 3. Pilot Project Proposal.

1. **AVOIDABLE PRACTICES:** When it comes to tree plantings on both public and private property in the city, there are a number of common arboricultural practices that compromise trees' vigor. Some of these practices are illustrated, as follows:



PLANTER RAISED ABOVE GRADE OF TREE PIT



DE-ICING SALTS



TREE PLANTED TOO LOW AND INADEQUATE SOIL VOLUME



"LIMBING UP" / OVER-PRUNING



EQUIPMENT DAMAGE



COMPACTION - VEHICULAR



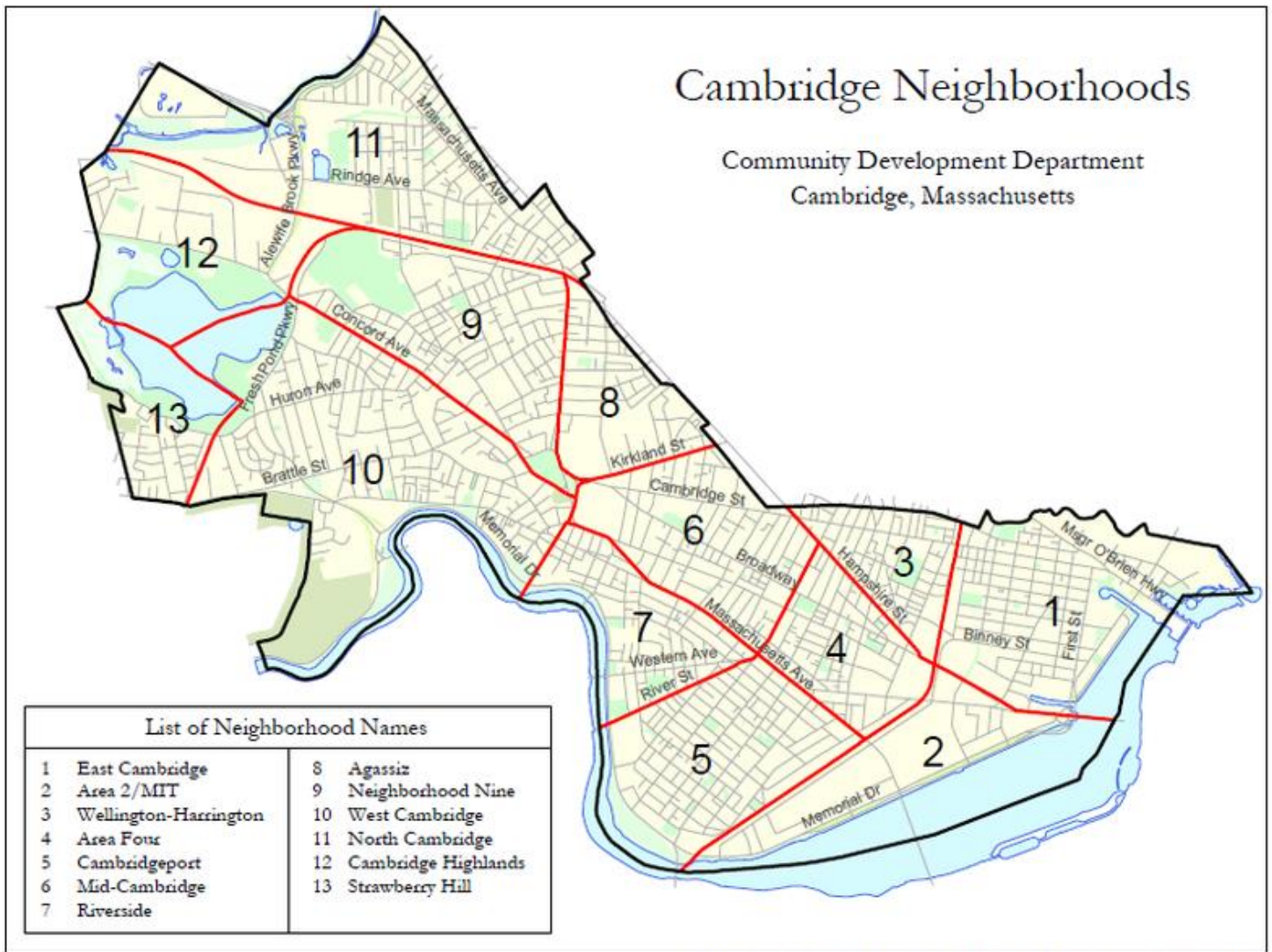
GIRDLING ROOTS



VOLCANO MULCHING

AVOIDABLE PRACTICES

2. URBAN FORESTRY AND PARKS MANAGMENT: Given Cambridge's geography and diverse neighborhoods, it may be worthwhile to explore the concept of dividing the city into 5-6 landscape management zones, each headed by a zone manager. A general foreman would oversee the work of the zone managers. This is a model employed by towns such as Brookline, MA. This system allows managers to become intimately familiar with and accountable to their area of responsibility. It also provides an efficient conduit for residents and businesses from the respective areas to communicate their concerns and desires to the City. For example, five to six zone managers, with the responsibility of 2-3 neighborhood each, could oversee Cambridge's 13 neighborhoods.



3. PILOT PROJECT PROPOSAL

It would be wonderful if this the Urban Forestry Master Plan effort could culminate in a legacy project. Several meetings ago, I briefly mentioned the idea of building a highly visible pilot project in Central Square, the civic heart of our city. Below are photos of three exemplary tree planting/ permeable paving projects in the Boston area. The first is along lower Boylston Street in Boston's Fenway neighborhood. The second is of one of the allées of lindens that the surround the Christian Science Center and the third photo was taken from Atlantic Avenue along the Rose Kennedy Greenway. The final two images are: a) a typical block in Central Square and b) a rendering showing how that same sidewalk could be re-imagined to support a healthy tree canopy.



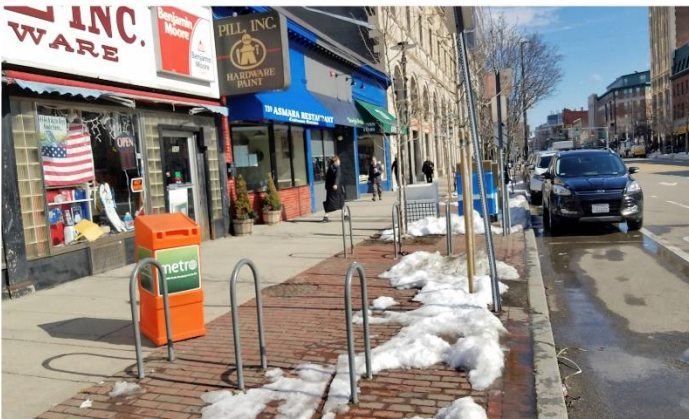
**BOYLSTON STREET, BOSTON
TREE PLANTING ZONE WITH PERMEABLE
PAVERS AND TREE GRATES**



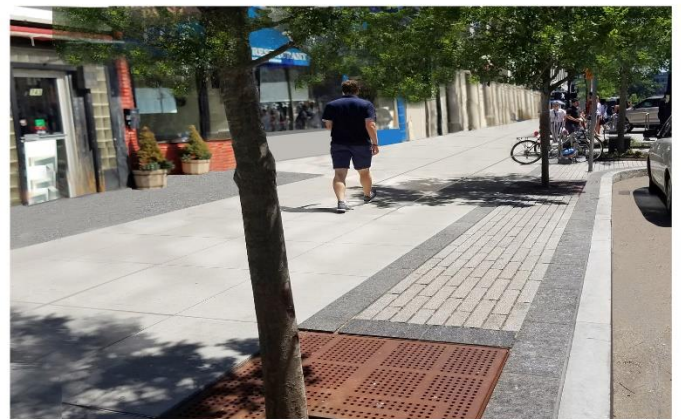
**CHRISTIAN SCIENCE CENTER, BOSTON
TREE GRATES SUSPENDED ABOVE LEVEL
OF SOIL**



**ATLANTIC AVENUE, BOSTON
CONTINUOUS TREE PLANTING ZONE
PERMEABLE PAVER FEATURE STRIP**



CENTRAL SQUARE, CAMBRIDGE - TYPICAL SIDEWALK



**CENTRAL SQUARE - RE-IMAGINED WITH CONTINUOUS TREE PLANTING
ZONE WITH PERMEABLE PAVING FEATURE STRIP ALONG CURB**

PROPOSED PILOT PROJECT - CENTRAL SQUARE

Thank you for making it through this rather long letter. I look forward to seeing you on Thursday!

With kind regards,

Elena

[Elena Saporta, ASLA, RLA, LEED AP](#)