

AGENDA

- **Staff Introductions**
- **Project Objectives**
 - **Complete Streets Approach**
- **Resident Q&A**

City Staff:

Community Relations Manager*	Kristen Kelleher – kkelleher@cambridgema.gov
Project Administrator for Community Relations*	Linda Spencer – lspencer@cambridgema.gov
Project Manager/Supervising Engineer	Melissa Miguel – mmiguel@cambridgema.gov
Traffic Calming Manager	Juan Avendano – javendano@cambridgemg.gov

****Please send all questions/comments/concerns/feedback to the Community Relations staff listed above. The staff will triage the requests internally before providing response back.***

What will this reconstruction project address and how are design decisions made?

- The Avon Hill Street/Hillside Avenue Reconstruction Project is part of the City’s Five-Year Plan (cambridgema.gov/fiveyearplan). The Five-Year Plan is a comprehensive plan for designing streets that safely accommodate all users, of all ages and abilities - pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, and public transportation users. The plan is developed with many priorities in mind: existing street and sidewalk conditions, proximity to destinations such as, but not limited to, parks, major squares, senior centers, and schools.
- The City Council adopted a complete streets policy in 2016 for redesigning streets in Cambridge. Complete Streets is an approach to planning, designing, building, operating, and maintaining streets that enables safe access for all users who need them.



What other policies guide the design?

- Vision Zero
- City of Cambridge Pedestrian Plan
- Cycling Safety Ordinance (CSO)
- Urban Forestry Master Plan
- Clean Water Act / City's MS4 permit

These policies and plans provide a basis for our design.

How do all these plans and policies translate to specific street and sidewalk designs?

Starting with accessibility. Why is Accessibility important?

- ***It's the law!*** Both Federal and State regulations cover the construction of new sidewalks and require newly constructed sidewalks to be accessible.
- ***It's the right thing to do!*** The City wants its sidewalks to be as inviting and usable for people of all ages and abilities, i.e., people using wheelchairs, walkers or pushing strollers for example.
- As sidewalks are being redesigned, the team needs to identify and address existing deficiencies in the layout. Federal ADA regulations require that at existing pinch points (such as at street trees, hydrants, utility poles) a 36" minimum compliant sidewalk clearance must exist between these fixtures and the back of public sidewalk right of way. In locations where achieving this minimum clearance is not attainable, the City may be required to construct a new 48" compliant sidewalk around this obstruction. This is achieved by constructing a bump out around the obstruction and into the roadway.

"How about you leave it alone?"

- Recently the City identified Avon Hill Street as a location in need of maintenance paving, as was performed this past summer. City policy requires once this paving is complete all adjacent pedestrian ramps must be brought into federal ADA compliance. However, when looking at the street as a whole, only addressing non-compliant pedestrian ramps will not address the overall accessibility issues that exist today.

Can overhead wires be buried?

- The poles carry other utilities not just electric that would need grounding.
 - **Currently, is this something utilities such as Comcast, VZ, etc are even considering?** - None of the utility companies currently have plans to convert their overhead cables to underground systems in Cambridge. .

- **What is the cost / LF to ground?** - It is difficult to give a typical LF cost for this work because it is very site specific. All the utility companies would be entitled to recover their costs for design and construction. Where this would be a benefit specifically for specific residents, the property owners would all need to agree to pay for the cost of design and construction to move the distribution cables to underground duct banks and new underground services to their buildings. A new underground duct bank system would likely remain fed from overhead cables from an adjacent street. Poles would need to remain for City streetlights. New underground duct banks will also occupy space that could be used for additional trees or other plantings. The duct bank work would add significant time to the construction duration.
- **What exactly is the resident paying for?** Just the connection from the street to the structure? The property owners would need to agree to pay for the distribution duct banks as a shared cost plus each property owner would need to pay for new underground services to their building. This could also trigger electrical upgrades in the buildings at the owner's cost. A very rough ballpark number is a minimum of \$100,000 per building.
- **Anything else that should be considered?**- We have only seen this type of overhead to underground happen as part of major redevelopment projects where it is paid for entirely by the developer. The cost/benefit and level of disruption does not make sense for an individual street.

Will I keep my brick sidewalk?

- City policy is to replace sidewalk materials in kind. Existing brick sidewalks will be replaced with new ADA compliant, wire cut brick and the same for existing concrete sidewalks. However, at the start of the project property owners will receive a Sidewalk Material Selection form. This form gives the property owner the option of keeping their existing sidewalk material or changing. Property owners can also opt to “buy up” from existing concrete sidewalks to new wire cut, brick sidewalks at the contractors cost. Typically, pricing the City has seen to “buy up” to brick is approximately \$250/sy but cannot be determined for this project until the Contractor has been selected. Interested residents should complete the form once received to indicate their sidewalk material choice.

Public Shade Trees

- Public street trees in Massachusetts are protected under Mass General Law (MGL). Healthy, existing street trees will not be removed or replaced as part of this contract. The City Arborist is the only person authorized to remove a healthy street tree. All new street tree planting locations will be identified as part of this design process.

Wrong Way Traffic

- This is an enforcement issue and will be brought to the attention of the Traffic Dept and CPD. Adding additional signage at the direction of the Traffic Dept will be incorporated into the design.

Project Website

- <https://www.cambridgema.gov/Departments/publicworks/cityprojects/2024/avonhillstandhillsideave>
- To sign up for email notifications, please visit the project page above; . Under the »Contact« tab please click »Sign Up Now« to enter your email address to be added to the list;