

THE CAMBRIDGE LIFE



Infrastructure Issue

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A New Era
for Cambridge
Education

Cycling
Safety
in Cambridge

Digging Deep
for a Cleaner
Energy Future

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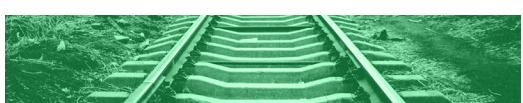
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Message from the City Manager

Great cities are built not only on their history, but on their ability to evolve. Ours has always been defined by community, innovation, and a shared commitment to the future—a spirit visible in every corner of Cambridge, from safer rebuilt streets and sustainable schools to renewed parks and gathering spaces. These infrastructure projects—large and small—are reshaping how we move, learn, live, and work, representing years of thoughtful planning, robust community engagement, and a collective commitment to equity and resilience.

Infrastructure may not always be glamorous and can sometimes be disruptive, but it touches every aspect of our lives. Repaving streets or replacing aging utilities ensures our city's systems can withstand climate challenges, support housing and business vitality, and strengthen the social fabric that makes Cambridge home. These projects also show what's possible when government, residents, and community partners work together. Through meetings, workshops, and surveys, thousands have helped shape everything from the placement of trees and benches to the design of intersections and stormwater systems—creating infrastructure that reflects our shared values: safe, accessible, inclusive, and forward-looking.

Across departments, we're ensuring every investment delivers multiple benefits—advancing housing goals, improving environmental performance, expanding green space, and promoting accessibility for all. Many projects now feature sustainable design, from all-electric systems to stormwater gardens that reduce flooding and improve water quality, moving us closer to our climate and resilience goals.



None of this progress would be possible without our dedicated staff—engineers, planners, educators, maintenance crews, and public safety teams—whose professionalism and pride are reflected in every new sidewalk, classroom, and streetlight.

To our residents, thank you for your patience and partnership. Construction can be challenging, but it signals renewal and progress. As these projects take shape, they lay a stronger foundation for opportunity, equity, and community connection for decades to come. At their core, these stories are about people, vision, and the belief that our City's best days are still ahead.

Sincerely
Yi-An Huang

A New Era for Cambridge Education:

The Opening of the Tobin Montessori Darby Vassall Upper Schools and Community Complex

On a bright September morning, the doors of Cambridge's newest Tobin Montessori and Darby Vassall Upper Schools and Community Complex opened to students, families, and faculty — but this was more than the opening of a brand-new facility. It was the culmination of nearly a decade of planning, collaboration, and investment. It was the moment a school community stepped across front doors intentionally built just for them.

For years, Darby Vassall Upper School staff, teachers and middle schoolers made do in spaces never meant for them. Meanwhile, students at the Tobin Montessori went years without a cafeteria or large playground. Students and teachers squeezed into retrofitted classrooms, science labs were improvised, gyms were shared, and offices tucked into borrowed corners.

"In the history of our school, we never had our own front door," said Darby Vassall Upper School Principal Daniel Coplon-Newfield. "We always felt like tenants — our signs temporary, our presence provisional, as we shared spaces with our dear friends at the Tobin Montessori School and others."

Today, the metaphor of feeling like tenants is gone. The new state-of-the-art 359,100-square-foot — a civic landmark housing the Tobin Montessori School (316 students, grades pre-K through 5), Darby Vassall Upper School (DVUS) (300 students, grades 6 through 8), CPS Special Start and DHSP Preschool Programs (80+ preschoolers), DHSP Community School Afterschool Program (100

students), athletic facilities, performing arts spaces, playgrounds, and community amenities — signals something larger: a bold commitment by the City of Cambridge and Cambridge Public School District to invest in its future, not just for today's students, but for generations to come.

"What this represents is a commitment," continued Principal Coplon-Newfield. "There's not just the civic commitment, but an educational commitment. It is an investment that I don't think other municipalities make. This is the fulfillment of an investment in our education and our community that we should be really proud of and not take for granted."

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What this represents is a commitment, there's not just the civic commitment, but an educational commitment

A Civic Cornerstone

Replacing the Brutalist-era building that once stood on the site located at Vassal Lane, Concord Avenue, and Alpine Street in West Cambridge, the new facility serves nearly 1,000 children from across Cambridge.

The City was intentional in designing a place that would serve not only students, but the entire community. It is also a neighborhood anchor, with a 500+seat auditorium, two full-size gymnasiums, athletic fields, playgrounds, and over six acres of public green space. Walking and biking paths tie the campus into the city's wider network, creating a civic landmark that belongs to everyone.

"This is more than a school building," said Brendon Roy, Director of Capital Building Projects and Project Manager for the new complex. "It's a community hub. A place where learning, recreation, arts, and civic life all come together."

Three distinct playgrounds — including one adaptive space for students with autism — invite all ages and abilities. Diamond-shaped fields, an open multi-use field, and a splash pad anchor the outdoor campus. Indoors, two gyms and a state-of-the-art auditorium ensure students and community members alike can gather, perform, and play.

Public art and civic-facing design choices ensure the building doesn't stand apart from the neighborhood it belongs to it. Landscaping, new pathways, and green infrastructure tie the school seamlessly into West Cambridge.

Designed With Intention

Every detail of the building reflects years of careful planning to serve the unique developmental needs of students. The design fosters age-appropriate learning, with spaces that balance independence and support. Middle schoolers benefit from flexible classrooms that encourage co-teaching and wider hallways that reduce congestion, while elementary students learn in environments that celebrate Montessori principles.

"Having been involved in every step of the design process, we were able to reflect not only the needs of our faculty and students, but the elements that would help transform how children learn and how we can best support them," said Tobin Montessori Principal Jaime Frost.

Across the building, the central "Heart of the School" acts as a crossroads, promoting connection and collaboration.

Wayfinding is inspired by Cambridge's own natural history. Each section of the building takes cues from the four elements — Earth, Air, Fire, and Water — and from the site's ecoregions, grounding children in a sense of place. Biophilic design gestures, abundant daylight, and maximized views of the outdoors encourage wellness and invite students to see their building as a living teaching tool.

The exterior's palette of brick and metal pays homage to the site's history as a clay pit, while the overall vision of "a school within a park" integrates civic presence with natural surroundings.





An Investment in the Future

At its core, this project embodies Cambridge's ambitious commitment to sustainability. Designed for Net Zero Emissions under the City's Net Zero Action Plan, it is projected to become the most energy-efficient school building in Cambridge.

Ground-source and air-source heat pumps provide heating and cooling, while a solar canopy will generate approximately 1.1 million kWh annually — enough to offset the building's electricity use.

Underground parking infrastructure is able to support 100% electric vehicle charging, while the site is car-free at the surface, giving space back to trees, fields, and walking paths. By 2035, the campus will triple its tree canopy, exceeding City ordinances and reinforcing the vision of a school that breathes with nature.

The site also stands as a model of climate resilience. Elevated grading places the ground floor above 2070 flood projections, while the 1.25-million-gallon underground tank, rain gardens, and bioswales capture and reuse stormwater, including for irrigation of athletic fields. Material health was also a driving priority: every material selected

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Few cities make this kind of investment — putting sustainability, resilience, and community pride at the forefront”

meets the rigorous standards of the Living Building Challenge, free of “red list” chemicals.

Indoor air quality is actively monitored, with operable windows linked to the mechanical system to preserve energy and wellness.

These investments are projected to earn the facility LEED Platinum certification, setting a new bar for sustainable civic architecture.

“There are plenty of municipalities that build new schools,” said Roy. “But few make this kind of investment — with breathing room for future enrollment, with sustainability and resilience at the forefront, with a commitment to design that reflects pride in education and community.”

A New Identity and a Place of Belonging

The school community also embraced this moment to redefine itself. Students at the then Vassall Upper School led a process to select a new name, ensuring that when the doors opened, it wasn't just a new building but the start of a new chapter. A front door, a new name, a purpose-built home — together, they form a symbolic foundation of belonging and pride.

For the students, teachers, and families who will use this space every day, the building's symbolic impact is just as important as its technical performance.

"This building gives us identity," said Principle Coplon-Newfield. "It gives us a name, a front door, and a place where our community belongs. For years we felt temporary — now we feel permanent. That changes everything."

Through it all, the building reminds Cambridge of what is possible when a city chooses to invest boldly.

Gratitude and Vision

For those who have lived through years of transition — packing and unpacking classrooms, learning in borrowed corners, improvising at every turn — the opening carried deep emotional weight. It is not just the start of a school year, but the beginning of a new chapter in Cambridge's story.

"This project," said Cambridge City Manager Yi-An Huang, "is a statement of so many of our values. It says we believe in education, in sustainability, in resilience, and in community. It says we believe in the future of Cambridge."

And on this fall morning, as students streamed through the doors, wide-eyed at the light-filled classrooms, soaring gyms, and expansive playgrounds, that future felt very close at hand.

KEY FACTS & FEATURES

359,100 square feet

Total Building Square Footage (including indoor parking garage)

532

Auditorium Seating Capacity

Three playgrounds

Age-appropriate areas

2021 year

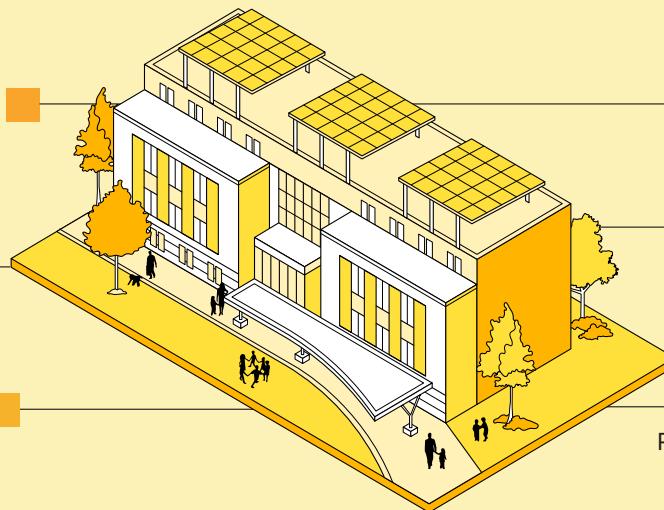
Ground-breaking

9 acres

Site Size, including 6 acres of public green space

2025 year

Project's end milestone



- Montessori Classrooms include observation spaces, student kitchen and wood elements
- Upper School Classrooms include state of the art science labs, small group breakout spaces
- Cafeteria: Sensory-friendly lunch room is designed to offer students a calmer, quieter space during lunchtime to support their sensory and social needs

- Designed for Net Zero Emissions under Cambridge's Net Zero Action Plan
- Sustainable: 1.25-million-gallon underground tank, bioswales, rainwater harvesting, and grading elevated above 2070 flood projections.
- Underground parking infrastructure to support 100% electric vehicle charging

Community Profile

Andromeda Lisle

Among the many features of the new Tobin Montessori and Darby Vassall Upper Schools, one wall stands out: *Tranquility*, a mosaic of a humpback whale and its calf created by Cambridge-born artist Andromeda (Annie) Lisle. A graduate of Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, Lisle has built a career rooted in her love of animals, biology, and mythology, drawing on her Cherokee, Black, and Irish heritage as well as artistic traditions ranging from Eastern Woodland Indigenous to Celtic and West African.

Through her work, she explores themes of community, nature, and mutual support. We spoke with Lisle about what it means to leave a lasting mark in the schools where she grew up, her journey as an artist, and her hopes for the students who will encounter her work every day.

Q: Could you tell me about the inspiration behind the whale mural at the Montessori Vassall Upper Schools?

AL: It was three-fold. My very first mural, which was commissioned by the Harvard Ed portal, was of a whale, but much smaller. I was inspired by the local, indigenous cultural hero Moshup, who is a giant, but is able to transform into a whale. I chose the humpback whale because around here, humpbacks mean a lot to a lot of people. They're an important cultural icon for the Northeast, not even just Massachusetts. Whales are one of the few animals that spend an extremely long time caring for their young; they devote a lot of energy to just one or two calves. They spend years and years raising and teaching them and showing them how to live in their world. And I thought that was a good reflection for being in a school where the adults there are going to be guiding those kids at an extremely important and vulnerable point of their lives and giving them the tools to survive in our world. So that's why, when I designed it, I included the calf behind the whale to represent both the adult teachers and staff and all of the people that make up a support team in a school.



Q: What does it mean to you on a personal level to create something that will live on in the schools in Cambridge?

AL: It means a lot. I'm disabled, I collect Social Security, I rely on a lot of social services. And so, I'm unable to work as much as your average person, and I've always wanted to give back in some way to thank my community for helping support me all this time. The mosaic was a perfect way to do that for me.

Q: Do you see this project as part of a larger story about representation, community, or even cultural identity in Cambridge, but also universally?

AL: Oh, yeah, absolutely. And like I said before, I wanted to evoke a sense of community and show people, especially the kids, that you're not alone in this world.

Cycling Safety in Cambridge:

Progress, Projects, and the Path Forward



Cambridge's investment in high-quality bike infrastructure has transformed how people move through the City. Bicycling has grown steadily over the past two decades, with citywide counts showing a fourfold increase since 2004 and ridership now exceeding pre-pandemic levels. The strongest growth appears along corridors with separated bike lanes and shared-use paths, where comfort and safety have made biking more accessible to everyone. Today, 10% of Cambridge residents commute by bike. Bluebikes stations are among the busiest in the region, and in 2024 nearly half of all systemwide trips started or ended in Cambridge. The data is clear: when cities build safe, connected places to ride, people choose to bike.

- Since 2020, Cambridge has pursued the Cycling Safety Ordinance's ambitious goal of installing 25 miles of separated bike lanes by 2026. As of October 2025, an estimated 17 miles have been completed or are under installation—marking a major milestone toward the finish line. In 2025, the City advanced its commitment with the Broadway Safety Improvement Project, a key corridor linking neighborhoods across Cambridge. The first section, from Columbia Street to Portland Street, now features separated bike lanes and accessibility enhancements such as relocated bus stops to improve comfort for transit riders. Supported by extensive community engagement, the project will continue in 2026 near Cambridge Rindge and Latin School and the Main Library.
- As part of the Cycling Safety Ordinance, on-street parking was removed in locations where narrow street width could not accommodate parking alongside the new lanes. In response, the City updated the Parking and Transportation Demand Management, Zoning, and Commercial Parking Space Permits Ordinances in December 2024 to make it easier for property owners along "Flexible Parking Corridors" to share off-street parking. These corridors, identified in the 2020 Bike Plan Network for Greater Separation and bus priority corridors, enable adaptable parking rules to support the City's growing bike and bus networks while reducing the impact of parking changes and preparing for long-term shifts in demand. Another outcome was the revival of the long-dormant Commercial Parking Control Committee, which reconvened in September 2025.
- Other highlights of 2025 included completing the Main Street, Vassar Street, and Aberdeen Avenue Safety Improvement Projects, as well as continuing the Cambridge Street project through a new resident-led Working Group.

The Separated Bike Lane Year Five Annual Report highlights progress in mileage since the Cycling Safety Ordinance was passed and offers a preview of what's planned for the final year.

► To access Cycling Safety Ordinance Projects, please visit: [⊕ https://camb.ma/csomap](https://camb.ma/csomap)

Reimagining Carl Barron Plaza:

An Investment Into Central Square's Future

Carl Barron Plaza has long been the most significant public gathering space in Central Square. Now, thanks to substantial planning and investment by the City of Cambridge, this cornerstone of the community is being transformed into a safer, more vibrant, and more welcoming destination.

A Careful, Collaborative Process

The redesign of Carl Barron Plaza and the adjacent MBTA bus terminal is not a quick fix—it's the result of years of careful planning, technical expertise, and collaboration. City staff worked hand-in-hand with consultants, the Central Square Business Improvement District (BID), and countless community voices to ensure every detail serves both daily users and the broader vision for Central Square.

From the earliest stages, the City emphasized listening to residents and businesses. That feedback shaped everything from the scale of the Plaza to the layout of seating, landscaping, and bus shelters. This attention to community priorities, backed by City resources and staff support, has created a design that balances functionality with artistry.

An Investment in Place and People

The City's investment in this project is about more than new paving and bus shelters—it's about creating a Central Square that thrives. The expanded Plaza is designed to ease pedestrian flow, simplify bus transfers, and offer flexible public spaces for everything from casual conversations to major cultural events.

Some of the features made possible by the City's funding and oversight include:

- **Expanded Public Space:** The Plaza will be significantly larger, eliminating awkward street crossings and unifying the bus terminal with the heart of the square.
- **Modern Amenities:** From bottle-fill stations and public Wi-Fi to durable trash and recycling infrastructure, the Plaza is being outfitted for long-term, everyday use.
- **Smart Lighting and Surfaces:** Energy-efficient pedestrian-scale LED lighting, accessible walkways, and resilient surfacing all reflect the City's focus on safety and quality.
- **Greener Design:** The Plaza will feature more than double the existing trees, supported by a sophisticated system of soils, pavers, and irrigation to ensure their long-term health.

The Ribbon: An Icon for Central Square

One of the most distinctive features of the project, “The Ribbon,” reflects the City’s commitment to integrating art into public infrastructure. This sculptural element will wind through the Plaza, uniting its two halves while serving as seating, lighting, and performance space.

In partnership with the Cambridge Arts Council, the City commissioned local artist Sophy Tuttle to design and paint the Ribbon, ensuring it resonates with Central Square’s creative character. It will not only be a functional piece of urban design, but also a symbol of the City’s investment in culture and community identity.

Supporting Transit and Connectivity

The redesign also demonstrates the City’s close coordination with the MBTA to improve the commuter experience. New bus shelters will provide real-time information, protection from the elements, and a dedicated operations workspace for MBTA staff.

Meanwhile, the addition of a separated bicycle lane will seamlessly connect River Street’s protected cycle track to existing and planned routes on Massachusetts Avenue.

A Project That Reflects Cambridge Values

Every detail of this project—down to the paving stones and plantings—reflects the City’s broader commitment to accessibility, sustainability, and community-centered design. By investing in Carl Barron Plaza, the City is not just upgrading infrastructure; it is shaping a civic space that reflects Cambridge’s values of innovation, inclusivity, and cultural vitality.

As City leaders put it: *“This project reinvigorates the heart of Central Square, creating a place that is safe, welcoming, and fully integrated into the life of our community. It is an investment in people as much as in a place.”*

When complete, Carl Barron Plaza will stand as a testament to what thoughtful City investment, skilled staff, and dedicated community partnership can achieve: a true public square for all of Cambridge.



Rebuilding River Street

A Community-Centered Transformation

When you walk or drive down River Street today, it's easy to see change taking shape. Beneath the construction signs and evolving detours lies one of Cambridge's most ambitious infrastructure projects — a complete reconstruction of River Street and its connecting public spaces. It's a project years in the making, built on collaboration, innovation, and a shared commitment to creating a safer, more vibrant, and more resilient neighborhood and City streets.

The River Street Reconstruction Project is transforming the corridor from Memorial Drive to Massachusetts Avenue — including Carl Barron Plaza, Pleasant Street, Norman M. Tubman Square, and surrounding neighborhood streets. What began as a necessary upgrade to century-old underground utilities has evolved into a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reimagine how this critical street serves everyone who lives, works, and travels here.

"River Street is more than just a roadway," says Jim Wilcox, City Engineer, Department of Public Works. "It's a connector — between neighborhoods, between businesses, and between people. Every decision in this design process has been rooted in improving that daily experience."

The project began construction in late 2022 and is expected to be substantially complete by fall 2026, with several sections finishing earlier. Work is performed in short, carefully managed segments to keep the street open and ensure that residents, businesses, and emergency services always have access.



Building for the Future

Much of the work begins below the surface. Parts of River Street's underground infrastructure are more than 100 years old, so the project includes brand-new sanitary sewers, stormwater systems, and water mains to support modern levels of service and climate resilience.

Above ground, the redesign delivers a safer, more welcoming environment for everyone — whether walking, biking, taking the bus, or driving. Wider sidewalks, improved crossings, and accessible public spaces will make it easier to move through and enjoy the corridor.



Designed with the Community, for the Community

From the very beginning, the River Street project was shaped by the people who know it best. At its outset, the City facilitated a robust community engagement process that invited feedback and ideas at every stage of design.

That process included:

- **A working group of residents, businesses, and neighborhood representatives who met 12 times**
- **Community meetings, project walks, and outdoor open houses that brought people together to share input directly on site**
- **Visits with local business owners to understand day-to-day needs**
- **Online tools — including a project webpage, interactive maps, and virtual open houses — that kept everyone informed and engaged**

This consistent, transparent approach helped refine the design to reflect what the community values most: safety, accessibility, beauty, and connection.

Investing in the Neighborhood

Beyond River Street itself, nearby neighborhood streets — including Fairmont Avenue, Rockwell Street, Laurel Street, and others — have and will also be rebuilt as part of the City's ongoing Five-Year Sidewalk and Street Reconstruction Plan. Together, these improvements represent a major investment in the neighborhood's long-term vitality and walkability.

Celebrating Newest Shared Street

Fairmont Avenue was redesigned as a Shared Street — a program focused on designing streets that safely serve people of all ages and abilities.

Sometimes called “play streets” or “living room streets,” Shared Streets are designed to give pedestrians priority while safely accommodating low-speed vehicles and cyclists.

Digging Deep for a Cleaner Energy Future

On a crisp morning earlier this year in Kendall Square, shovels of dirt flew as city officials, community partners, and Eversource representatives gathered to celebrate something both groundbreaking and history-making. Beneath the cheers and speeches was the start of a project unlike anything built before in the U.S.: the Greater Cambridge Energy Program (GCEP), a massive investment in the region's energy future — and it's all happening underground.

Where once stood a parking garage, there will soon be green space, cutting-edge lab buildings, and — hidden 105 feet below — the largest underground electrical substation in the country. At 35,000 square feet, this facility will quietly power the daily lives of residents and businesses, while freeing up space above ground for community use. The new underground substation will be joined by eight new underground transmission lines interconnecting to existing substations in the surrounding area.

The project is expected to bolster system reliability, meet growing energy needs, and further facilitate access to clean energy resources.

"This is a creative solution that shapes a more sustainable and resilient energy future," said Eversource CEO Joe Nolan at the ceremony. "By working hand in hand with Cambridge and our partners, we're meeting today's needs while preparing for tomorrow's clean energy transition."

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This project is about reliability, resiliency, and responsibility

Why it Matters

The City is moving away from fossil fuels and more residents are installing electric heat pumps, electric vehicles are increasingly being purchased and driven on our streets, and entire buildings are being built as fully electric. Electric vehicles line the streets. Entire buildings are being designed with decarbonization in mind. That progress comes with a challenge: the grid needs to keep up.

The GCEP is designed to do just that. Once online, the underground substation will have enough capacity to electrify all residential heating in Cambridge and replace up to half of the commercial sector's gas demand with clean electric systems. It will also make room for more renewable energy.

"This project is about reliability, resiliency, and responsibility," said Cambridge City Manager Yi-An Huang. "We're ensuring that as our community grows, the power system grows with us — and in a way that supports our decarbonization goals."

A First-of-Its-Kind Design

Instead of rising above ground, the substation will be hidden underground, tucked beneath new green space between Broadway and Binney Street. Above, neighbors and visitors will enjoy a welcoming park and cutting-edge science facilities. Below, the lights, heat, and technology of the future will hum with power.

"The CRA and the City of Cambridge turned a planning challenge into an opportunity," said Tom Evans, Executive Director of the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority. "What was once a parking garage will become a vital energy hub, a space for discovery, and a place for the community."

Beyond Cambridge

The substation is just one piece of the puzzle. The GCEP includes eight new underground transmission lines running 8.3 miles through Cambridge, Somerville, and Boston, upgrades to five substations, and nearly 50 new distribution lines. Together, this network will ensure that electricity can flow reliably where it's needed most — whether it's to a family's new EV charger, a biotech lab's climate-control system, or a new apartment building designed for all-electric living.

Building Toward the Future

The project is expected to come online in phases, with the first elements ready by 2029 and full completion by 2031. Along the way, it will support roughly 500 full-time jobs and bring steady activity — and anticipation — to Kendall Square.

For Cambridge residents, the payoff will be felt in everyday life: a more resilient power system that keeps the lights on during storms, supports clean technologies, and helps the City move further away from fossil fuels.

"The GCEP is about more than wires and transformers," said Bryan Koop of BXP. "It's about powering the future of Cambridge in a way that makes space for people, for science, and for community."

As the groundbreaking shovels were set aside and the crowd dispersed, the scale of the project — and its promise — lingered. The work ahead will be complex and years in the making, but its impact will stretch far beyond Kendall Square. For Cambridge, the future of clean, resilient energy is being built right beneath its feet.



Volpe Site Transforming Into Mixed-Use Project



Not far from the site of the underground substation in Kenall Square, MIT is proceeding with the creation of a dynamic mixed-use project on the site. The master plan for the site development was approved in 2021 by the Planning Board after a community engagement process. The proposed development includes nearly 3 million square feet of space providing retail and restaurants, market-rate and affordable housing units, a community center, and science and innovation facilities.

The vibrant, mixed-use center will also provide pedestrian links and publicly-accessible open space, including a large park at the corner of Third Street and Broadway, a linear park adjacent to Sixth Street/Loughrey Way, a park adjacent to the community center, and a park on Binney Street. Foundation work has commenced and will continue into 2026. Broadway will have a one-way detour in place until spring 2026.

Bridging Communities: The Fitchburg Crossing Project

A bold new step toward safer travel and stronger connections is coming to Cambridge. The **Fitchburg Crossing Project** will create a dedicated crossing over the MBTA Fitchburg Commuter Rail Line, linking neighborhoods divided by the tracks and opening new pathways to Danehy Park, Fresh Pond Mall and beyond.

This project will make getting across the train tracks safer, easier and more inviting. The City is planning a new multi-use path stretching from Steel Place near Alewife Station to Sherman Street parallel to the tracks, unlocking seamless connections for walkers and cyclists alike.

With design funding secured, the City will select a design team this fall with design work beginning soon after.

Stay tuned for exciting updates!

This project builds on the **Danehy New Street Connector** Path to link Danehy Park, Fresh Pond and the Cambridge Watertown Greenway, creating a connected future for active transportation in Cambridge.



Building Resilience Below the Surface:

The Port Project Takes Shape

A deep investment in The Port neighborhood is turning lessons from the past into a blueprint for a more resilient future.

In Cambridge's Port neighborhood, change is happening—mostly underground. Beneath familiar streets and sidewalks, the City has been undertaking one of its most ambitious infrastructure improvement efforts to date: The Port Infrastructure Project. This multi-year initiative has and will protect homes, streets, and public spaces from the growing threat of flooding, while creating a greener, more connected, and more accessible neighborhood above ground.

Facing the Challenge of a Changing Climate

The Port has long been one of Cambridge's neighborhoods most vulnerable to flooding. With many buildings at low elevation, even moderate storms historically caused water to collect in basements and on streets. Climate change has only amplified those challenges, bringing more frequent and intense rainfall to the region.

"The data shows what residents have long known—The Port has felt the impact of flooding firsthand," said Jerry Friedman, Supervising Engineer, Cambridge Public Works. "Our investment here is about more than pipes and pavement. It's about building resilience and protecting a community that's at the heart of Cambridge."

A Major City Investment in Neighborhood Resilience

Over the course of this project, which began with a formal design and community process in 2015, Cambridge will invest over \$35 million in The Port for an integrated package of improvements: new water, sewer, and drainage systems; reconstructed streets and sidewalks; and expanded tree canopy and open space. At the center of this work are two underground tanks—an underground stormwater storage tank and sanitary storage tank and pump station.

The first tank—beneath Parking Lot 6 on Bishop Allen Drive—was completed in 2021. It holds up to 390,000 gallons of stormwater, supported by a new pump station and utility tunnel connecting beneath the MBTA Red Line to the Massachusetts Avenue storm drain.

The second tank will be installed in a future phase in the 2030s adjacent to Windsor Street. When complete, the Port Infrastructure Project will strengthen flood resilience and enhance neighborhood life. Rebuilt streets will improve mobility, while green spaces and trees will add shade, biodiversity, and beauty. These investments embody a forward-looking approach—balancing engineering excellence with environmental stewardship and community well-being.



More Than Infrastructure: Streets, Parks, and Everyday Access

Beyond stormwater management, The Port Project is an opportunity to reinvest in the neighborhood. Streets and sidewalks along Bishop Allen Drive, Columbia Street, Cherry Street, Washington Street, Eaton Street, and Pine Street have been and will be rebuilt for greater accessibility, safety, and comfort.

Design updates include shared streets that give pedestrians priority, create space for trees and plantings, and add green space where traditional curbs once stood.

The City has also expanded electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure in the area, advancing Cambridge's goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

A Renewed Park for a Renewed Neighborhood

Clement G. Morgan Park and Anthony Paolillo Tot Lot—a vital community space in The Port—is also being reimagined. The redesign preserves mature trees and lilac bushes while introducing new spaces shaped by resident feedback. The well-used basketball court is being reconstructed to include additional spectator space and new lighting and surfacing. Entirely new features include a "teen space/bouldering area" as well as a small dog run.

"Residents asked us to make sure improvements reflected how people really use the park," said Kathy Watkins, Deputy City Manager, City of Cambridge. "This redesign keeps what's loved, enhances what's needed, and prepares the park for the future."

A Shared Commitment to the Future

From gas main replacements to water line upgrades, nearly every aspect of The Port's infrastructure is being renewed—some of it for the first time in a century. The collaboration between City departments, Eversource, and the community underscores Cambridge's long-term commitment to sustainability, equity, and access. When complete in the early 2030s, the robust project will leave behind more than new pipes and pavement. It will deliver peace of mind—knowing that The Port is better prepared for the storms ahead, and that the City continues to invest deeply in the well-being of every neighborhood.

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Our investment here is about more than pipes and pavement. It's about building resilience and protecting a community”

The Rebirth of the Harvard Square KiOSK

For nearly a century, the little brick building in the heart of Harvard Square has been a beacon of connection. Built in 1927 as a subway entrance and later home to the legendary Out of Town News, the kiosk has always been more than a structure—it's been a meeting point, a cultural landmark, and a symbol of Cambridge's restless energy.

Now, after years of community input, careful planning, and painstaking restoration, the City of Cambridge unveiled a bold new chapter for this beloved landmark. In May 2025, the historic kiosk opened as the Cambridge KiOSK—a cultural incubator, community gathering space, and visitor information center designed to celebrate the City's creativity and diversity.

The opening day celebration delivered live music, refreshments, and the chance for residents and visitors alike to step inside the transformed space for the very first time.

Honoring the Past, Shaping the Future

The inaugural exhibit paid homage to the KiOSK's storied history with a pop-up newsstand celebrating Cambridge's print media legacy. Visitors saw how radical newspapers, music publications, and of course, Out of Town News itself shaped the city's identity. Weekly "15 Minutes of Cambridge" talks have brought these stories to life, creating a bridge between history and today's conversations.

But the new KiOSK isn't just about looking back. It's about creating a flexible, ever-evolving space for art, performance, and community connection. Visitors have come across live music, poetry readings, art workshops, comedy nights, and exhibits that change with the seasons—all shaped by the people of Cambridge.



"This transformation respects the KiOSK's rich history while creating new opportunities for gathering, creativity, and civic engagement in the heart of Harvard Square," said City Manager Yi-An Huang. "We have been excited to see it thrive as a welcoming hub where residents and visitors can connect and celebrate Cambridge's cultural vibrancy."

A Community Vision, Years in the Making

The reimagining of the KiOSK didn't happen overnight. Guided by a two-year community process, the design reflected the voices of residents, local organizations, and artists who wanted the space to be inclusive, dynamic, and true to Cambridge.

From the carefully restored roof and brick columns to the modern windows that now open the building to the plaza, every detail reflects a balance between honoring history and welcoming the future.

"This has truly been a labor of love," said Kathy Watkins, Deputy City Manager. "We encourage visitors to look up, take in the restored wood ceiling and historic details, and also enjoy the thoughtful modern touches that make this space accessible and inviting today."

A Gateway for Visitors, A Stage for Locals

The KiOSK also serves as the new home for the Cambridge Visitor Information Center, offering curated itineraries, insider tips, and the warmth of volunteers who know the city best—many of whom were once loyal Out of Town News patrons.

"Visitors will find more than just maps and directions," said Candice Beaulieu, Executive Director of the Cambridge Office for Tourism. "They'll discover personalized ways to experience the best of Cambridge's arts, culture, and history."

Meanwhile, CultureHouse, the nonprofit stewarding programming at the KiOSK, has invited local artists, nonprofits, and businesses to bring their creativity into the space. From small-scale performances to hands-on workshops, the goal has been to keep the programming as diverse and vibrant as the City itself.

"Out of Town News once brought global conversations to Harvard Square," said Aaron Greiner, Executive Director of CultureHouse. "Today, it's local connections that are most precious. The KiOSK is about creating those moments of discovery and belonging for everyone who walks through its doors."

More Than a Building

The reopening of the KiOSK is also part of a larger transformation. The City is in the midst of reconstructing Harvard Square's central plaza, adding new landscaping, public seating, and improved accessibility. By fall 2026, the plaza and KiOSK together will form a welcoming crossroads at the heart of Cambridge.

It's a reminder that this project isn't just about restoring a building—it's about reinforcing a commitment to community. The KiOSK's new life reflects the city's belief that public spaces should inspire, include, and connect.

With the doors open once again, the next chapter is already unfolding for the little brick building in Harvard Square just as a landmark of the past, but as a living, breathing space for the people of Cambridge today.

By the Numbers

- **1927:** Built as a subway entrance
- **1978:** Added to National Register of Historic Places
- **1983–2019:** Home to Out of Town News
- **2025:** Reopened as Cambridge KiOSK

2025 Exhibit & Event Highlights

- Then-Now celebration of paintings
- Butterfly Effect participatory installation
- Cambridge LGBTQ+ history exhibit stories
- Spontaneous Typewriter Poetry
- Community Cartooning & Drum Circles
- **& more!**

Multilingual Highlights

ENGLISH

Infrastructure Issue Overview

This issue of *Cambridge Life* celebrates the transformation happening across our City and neighborhoods. Infrastructure projects—large and small—are reshaping how we move, learn, live, and work. They represent years of thoughtful planning, robust community engagement, and a collective commitment to equity and resilience.



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ARABIC

نظرة عامة على قضية البنية التحتية

يحتفي هذا العدد من Cambridge Life بالتحول الشامل الذي تشهده مدينتنا وأجياؤنا. فمشاريع البنية التحتية - الكبيرة والصغيرة - تعمل على إعادة صياغة طريقتنا في التنقل والتعلم والعيش والعمل. وتجسد سنوات من التخطيط المعمق والمشاركة المجتمعية الفاعلة والالتزام الجماعي بتحقيق مبدأ الإنصاف والعدالة.



امسح رمز الاستجابة السريعة ضوئياً
للحصول على الإصدار الكامل

AMHARIC

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BANGLA

পরকাঠামো সমস্যার সংক্ষিপ্ত বিবরণ

ক্যাম্ব্ৰিজ লাইফেৰ এই সংখ্যাটি আমাদেৱ শহৰ এবং
আশেপাশেৱ এলাকাগুলিতে ঘটে যাওয়া পৰিৱৰ্তনকে উদ্যাপন
কৰে। বড় এবং ছেট পৰিকাৰ্ত্তমোগত প্ৰকল্পগুলি আমাদেৱ
চলাফেৱা, শেখা, বসবাস এবং কাজ কৱাৰ পদ্ধতিকে নতুন কৰে
গড়ে তুলছে। এগুলি বছৱেৱ পৰ বছৱ ধৰে চিন্তাশীল পৰিকল্পনা,
শক্তিশালী কমিউনিটি এনগেজমেন্ট এবং স্থিতিস্থাপকতাৰ প্ৰতি
সম্বিলিত প্ৰতিক্ৰিতি প্ৰতিনিধিত্ব কৰে।



সম্পূর্ণ সংস্করণটি পেতে QR কোডটি
স্ক্যান করুন



SPANISH

Apèsi sou Pwoblèm Enfrastrikti

Nimewo *Cambridge Life* sa a selebre transfòmasyon k ap fèt nan Vil nou an ak katye nou yo. Pwojè enfrastrikti—gwo ak piti—ap chanje fason nou deplase, aprann, viv, ak travay. Yo reprezante plizyè ane planifikasyon reflechi, angajman kominotè solid, ak yon angajman kolektif pou ekite ak rezistans.



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HAITIAN CREOLE

Resumen de la edición sobre infraestructuras

Este número de *Cambridge Life* celebra la transformación que está teniendo lugar en nuestra ciudad y en nuestros barrios. Los proyectos de infraestructura, ya sean grandes o pequeños, están reconfigurando la forma en que nos movemos, aprendemos, vivimos y trabajamos. Representan años de planificación cuidadosa, una sólida participación de la comunidad y un compromiso colectivo con la equidad y la resiliencia.



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CHINESE

基础设施专刊概览

本期《剑桥生活》颂扬我们的城市和社区正在发生的转变。基础设施项目无论是大是小,都在重塑着我们出行、学习、生活和工作的方式。这些项目代表着多年的周密规划、强有力的社区参与以及对公平和韧性的集体承诺。



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PORTEGUESE

Resumo da edição sobre infraestruturas

Esta edição da *Cambridge Life* celebra a transformação que está a acontecer na nossa cidade e nos nossos bairros. Os projetos de infraestruturas – grandes e pequenos – estão a remodelar a forma como nos movemos, aprendemos, vivemos e trabalhamos. Representam anos de planeamento cuidadoso, envolvimento sólido da comunidade e um compromisso coletivo com a equidade e a resiliência.



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Learn more about City Construction Projects

Review detailed information about City construction projects, Harvard University construction information, and all other construction updates at

✉ <https://www.cambridgema.gov/construction>



View City Construction Map:
✉ www.cambridgema.gov/Departments/publicworks/cityprojects/map



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