



Beech St at Elm St Pedestrian Safety Improvement Project

Project Update
August 18, 2026

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Department of Transportation

In collaboration with: The **Department of Public Works and Community Development**

Project Team

Project Manager

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Department of Transportation (CDOT)

- **Brooke McKenna**, *Transportation Commissioner*
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- **Stephanie Groll**, *Assistant Commissioner for Transportation Planning*
- **Bill Deignan**, *Senior Transportation Program Manager*
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- **Jackie McLaughlin**, *Communications Manager*
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- **Andy Reker**, *Transit Program Manager*
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- **Jess Horne**, *Senior Traffic Engineer*

Department of Public Works (DPW)

- **Jim Wilcox**, *City Engineer*
- **Jerry Friedman**, *Supervising Engineer*
- **Ellen Coppinger**, *Landscape Administrator*

City of Somerville

- **Adam Polinski**
- **Katherine White**
- **Lillian Worth**

Purpose, Outcome & Process

Purpose

We are improving safety at the intersection of Beech St and Elm St with a new intersection design. This is related to Somerville's Elm-Beacon Connector project.

Outcome

You will understand the latest on the project and know how to provide input.

Process

We will present slides and record. The recording will be posted on the city's website and shared.

Agenda

01. Project Background

- Project Area
- Outreach Schedule
- Project Outreach

02. Project Feedback

- Street Design Feedback

03. Project Design

- Project Roll Plan
- Project Design Key Features
- Recent Design Changes
- Key Features of Recent Changes
- Updated Parking Impacts

04. Schedule

- Implementation Schedule

01. Project Background

Project Area



Cambridge and Somerville have separate project areas that need to be planned to work together

Impacted Parking Spots

Cambridge Project Area

City of Somerville

Cambridge/ Somerville City Limits

Outreach Schedule

Street Design Feedback



Public Space Feedback

Led by Community Development, not CDOT
CDD will lead future consideration of the space's design, programming, and amenities. Community ideas shared through this project will help inform future planning for the space.

Public Space

Share your initial thoughts and ideas for the space. We'll share what we hear with CDD to help inform future planning.

Underway

Project Outreach

- May 21st: Pop-Up Meeting to share plan designs
- Project website: camb.ma/beechst
- Coordination with abutters and pollinator garden maintainers
- Flyering and Installation Updates

Existing volunteer garden, to be relocated



Photo from May 2026 Open House



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Department of Transportation

Beech at Elm Pedestrian Safety Project

Summer 2026 Update

What Will Change?

- Shorter pedestrian crossing
- New intersection layout
- Creation of new plaza space
- Removal of four parking spaces

Project Feedback Summary

Coming soon!
Visit the project website for the latest updates: camb.ma/beechst

Updated Timeline

- **Late August/Early September 2026:** Concrete island removal begins
- **September/October 2026:** Final paving, pavement markings and flex-post installation
- **Spring 2027:** City to install planters and other improvements to space with community input

Updated Design

- Additional loading zone

Map of Project Area

Somerville
Elm Street

Beech Street

Beech St and Elm St Pedestrian Safety

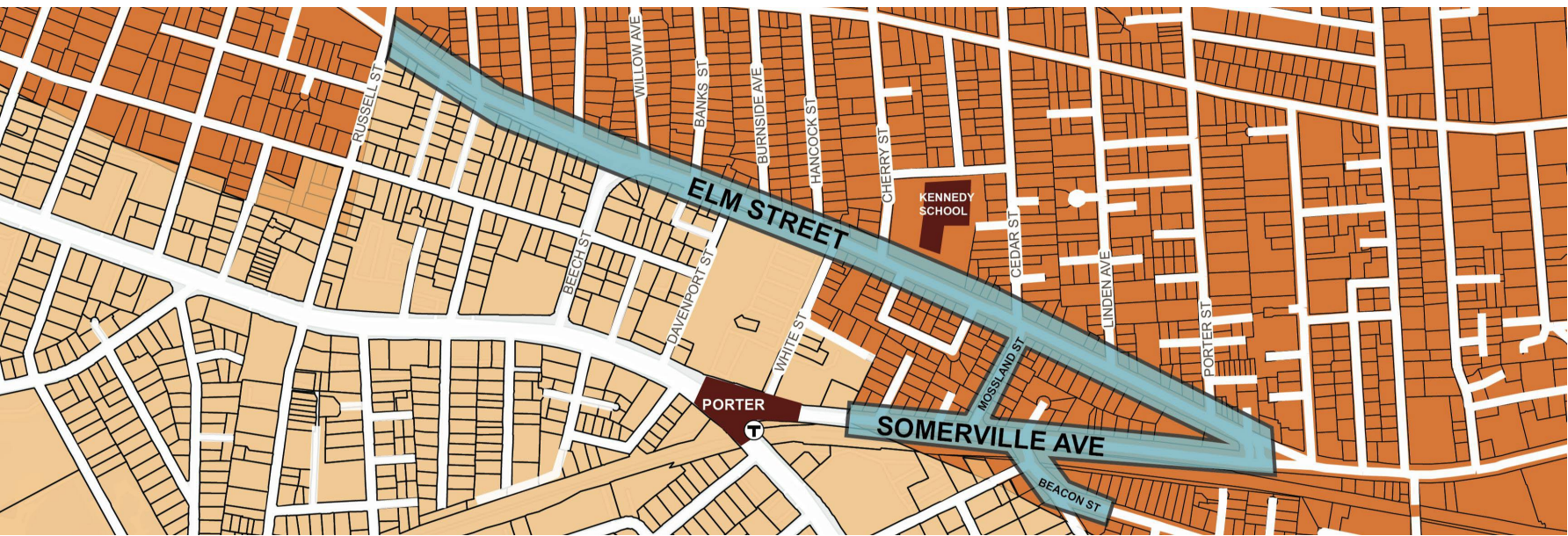
Impacted Parking Spots Cambridge Project Area City of Somerville Cambridge/Somerville City Limits

Scan for the project website:
View the roadway design and sign up for project email updates.

✉ awolfe@cambridgema.gov

🌐 camb.ma/beechst

Somerville's Elm-Beacon Connector



Design for Somerville's project started earlier than Cambridge's project



02. Project Feedback

Street Design-Related Feedback

What We've Heard

- Request for a loading zone within the project area from an abutter.
- Ensure emergency vehicles have access to all houses. This was always planned but is being emphasized for reassurance.
- Support for shortened crossings and additional stop signs on Elm St.
- Concerns about traffic congestion - all way stop will help with traffic.

View the Feedback Summary Report
camb.ma/beechst



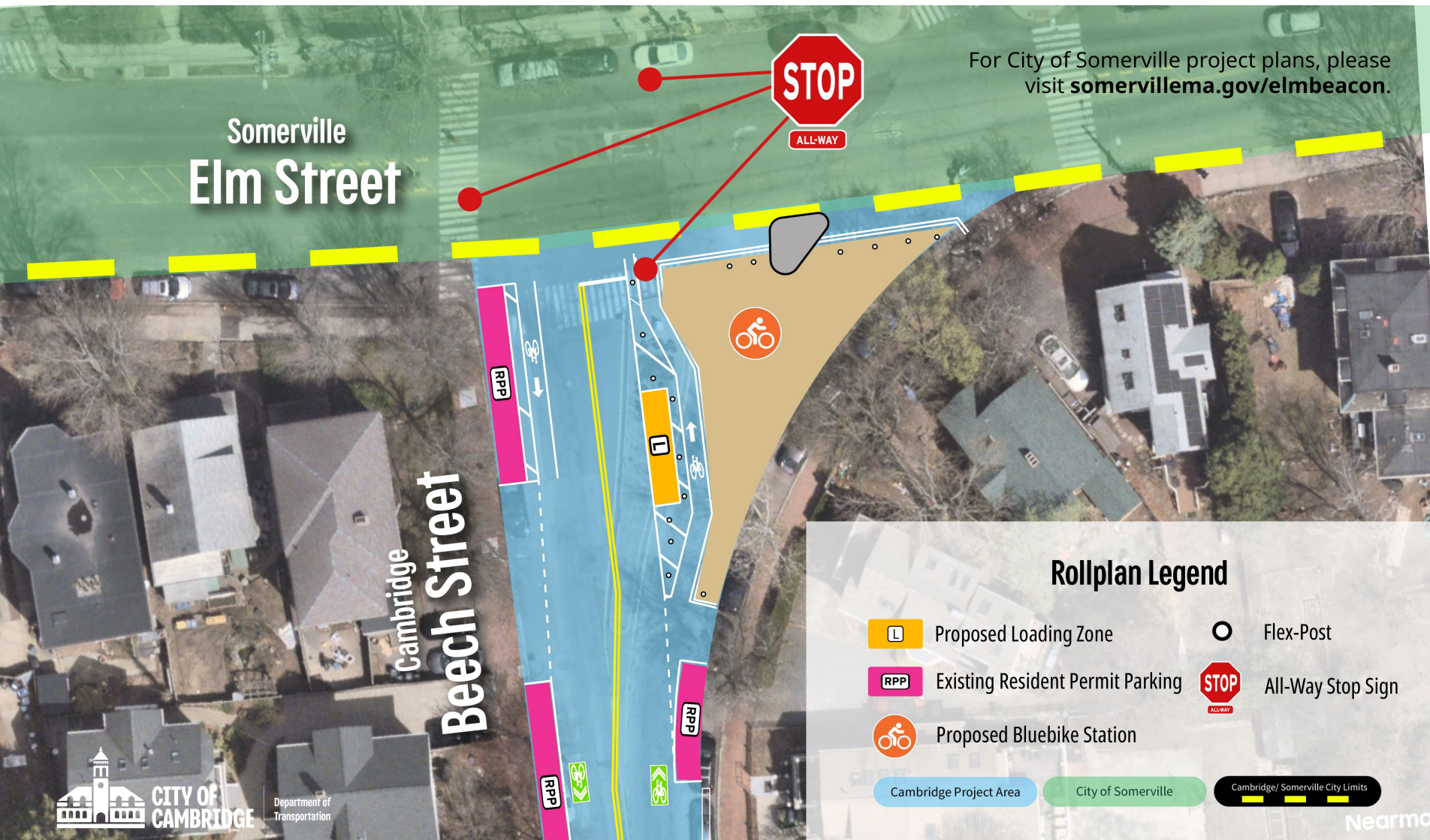
About the Project

The [Beech St at Elm St Pedestrian Safety Project](#)'s goal is to improve safety at this intersection. The project ties into changes the City of Somerville is making along Elm St as part of their [Elm-Beacon Connector](#) project. Our joint project will add all-way stop control to the intersection and will reorganize the intersection by permanently closing the right-turn lane on Beech St toward Willow Ave. These changes will reduce the size of the intersection, simplify vehicle movements, and create a safer, more predictable space for everyone who travels through the area.

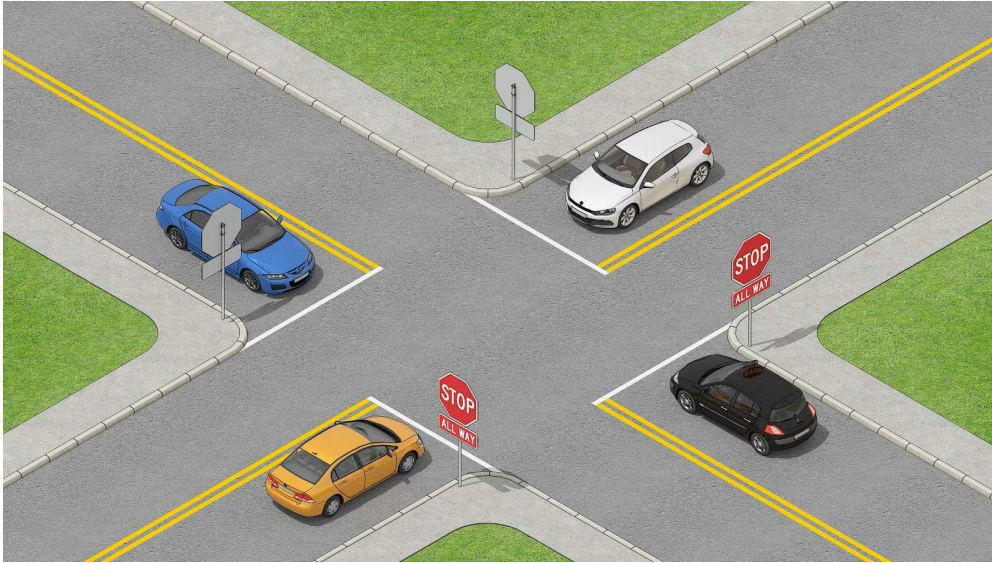


03. Project Design

Project Roll Plan

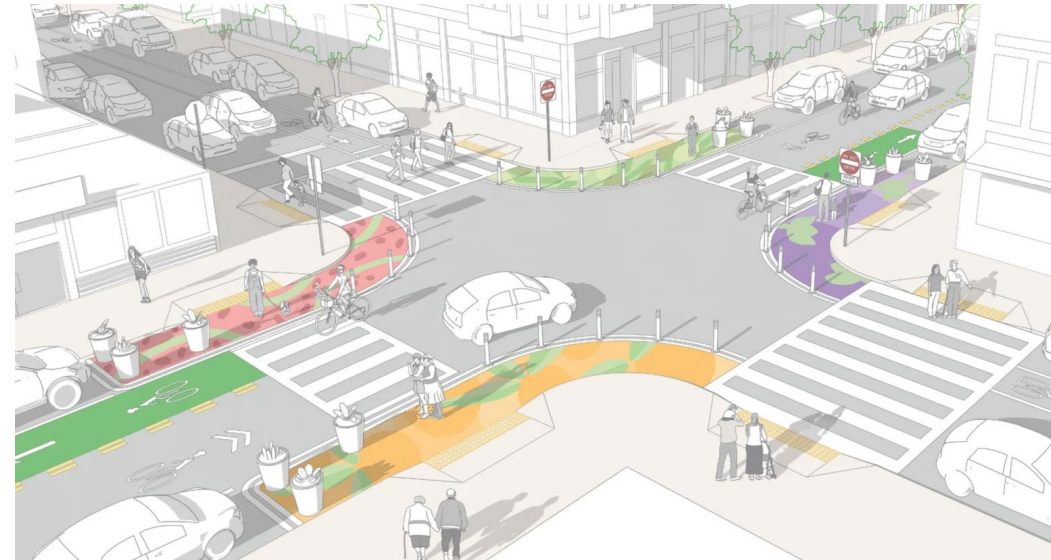


Project Design: Key Features



1. All-way stop

- Reduced through speeds on Elm St
- Clear right of way for intersection users
- More opportunities for Beech St drivers and cyclists to turn onto or off of Elm St
- Pedestrians crossing Elm St no longer need to judge for gaps in cross traffic



2. Crossing Improvements

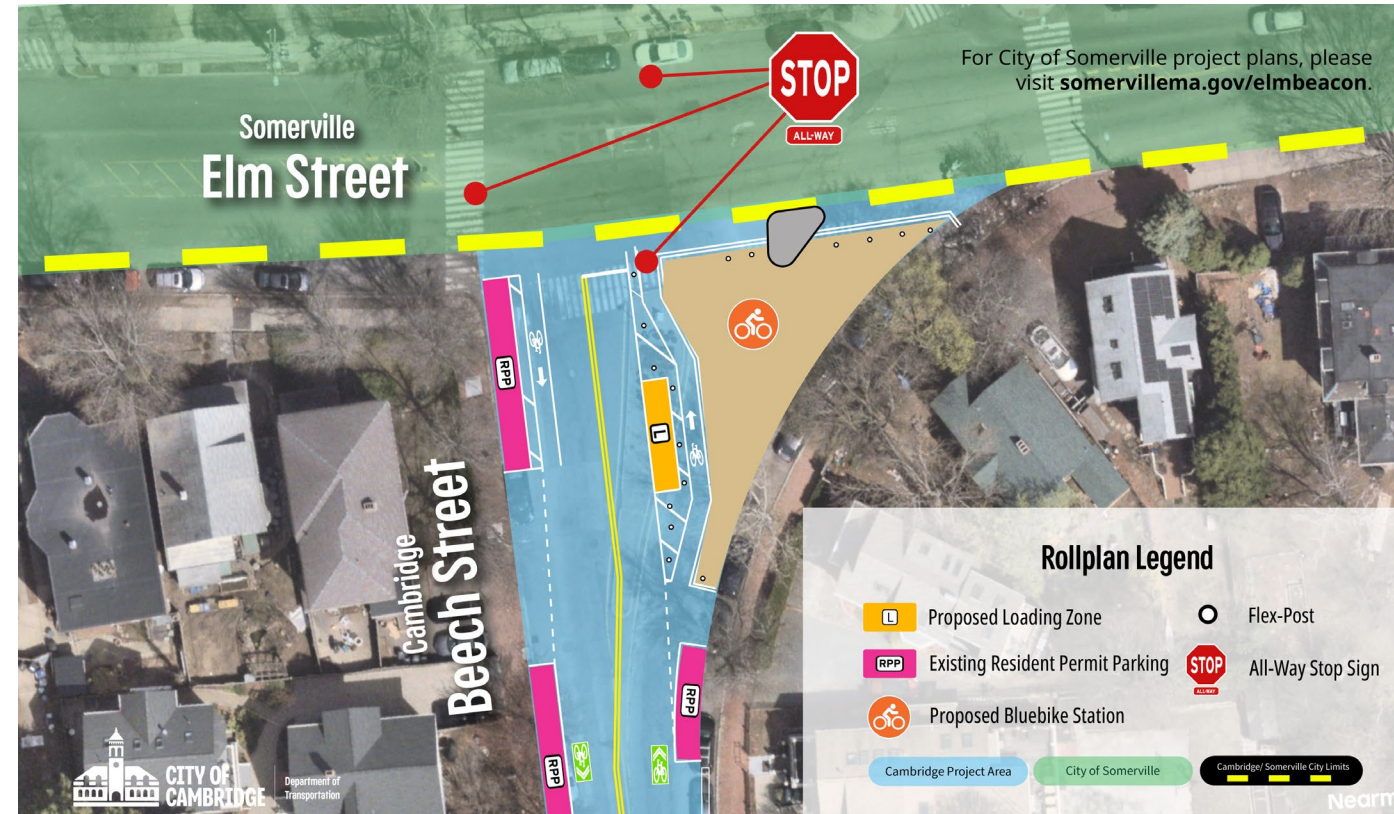
- Shorter crosswalks
- Improved sightlines
- Vehicles meet at 90 degrees

Recent Design Changes

Previous Plan



Updated Design

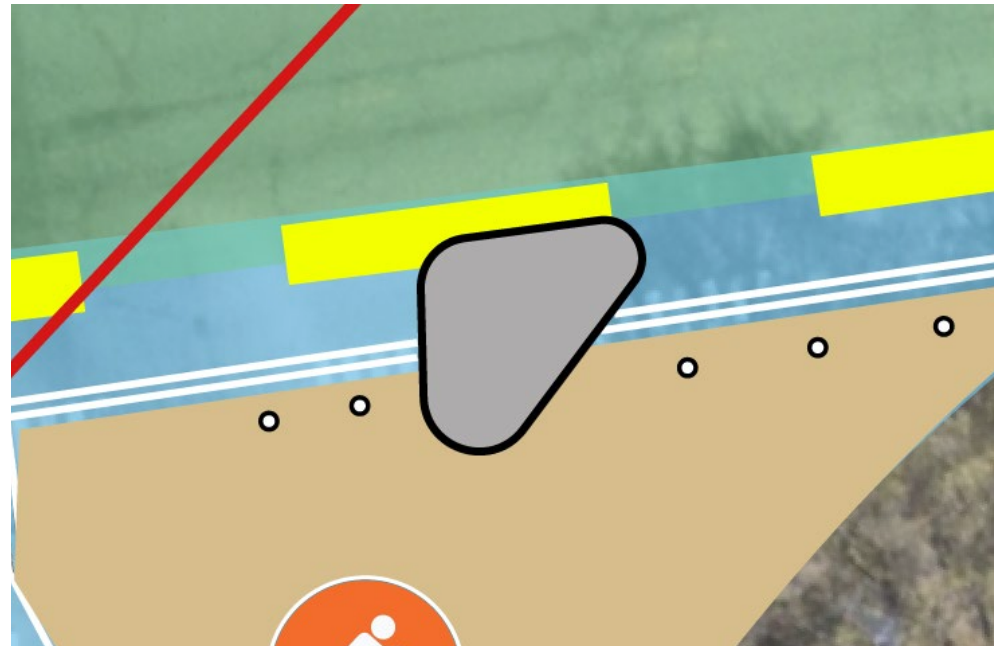


- More clearly indicates Cambridge's scope of work
- Identifies proposed and existing parking, with updates
- Indicates proposed Bluebikes Station near intersection

Recent Design Changes: Key Changes

Updated Design Creates a Loading Zone

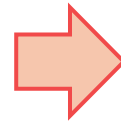
- Daytime loading and overnight parking added on Beech St. Adds two parking spaces versus prior proposal.
- Existing small concrete island to remain as it provides access to underground utilities and can't be easily removed as part of a quick-build project.
- Most elements of previous design stay the same. Public space becomes slightly smaller.



Parking Impacts

Updated Design Reduces Parking Impact

Original Design Parking Impact	
Permit Parking	-6
Total	-6



Updated Design Parking Impact	
Permit Parking	-6
Loading Zone* with Overnight Parking	+2
Total	-4

**30 feet long*

04. Schedule

Implementation Schedule

Later this month

- Island removal work begins. Should take 1-2 weeks
- No major changes to travel experience

September

- Cambridge work area is paved
- Pavement Markings

Late September/October

- Flex-Posts installed

Spring 2027

- Planters or other aesthetic improvements added

The End