



# 221 Mount Auburn Street

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

*Updated 11/21/25*

### **General Questions:**

**Q: Who is the point person for the City for any general concerns we have about this project? What about during the demolition?**

**A:** Kristen Kelleher, Community Relations Manager, 617-349-4825 or [kkelleher@cambridgema.gov](mailto:kkelleher@cambridgema.gov). To ensure you receive updates, please sign up under the “Contact” tab on the project website: [www.cambridgema.gov/221mtauburnst](http://www.cambridgema.gov/221mtauburnst)

Kristen Kelleher and her team will continue to lead the community outreach efforts throughout this process, including demolition.

**Q: Who is overseeing the demolition project?**

**A:** Deputy City Manager Kathy Watkins provides high-level coordination and will continue to be involved throughout the process. The City’s Capital Building Division is managing the demolition contract. Key staff include Brendon Roy (Director of Capital Building Projects), Monique Oliviera (Director of Construction), and field oversight from John Logiudice.

The City team also includes specialized consultants for reviewing, approving and monitoring construction activities. SGH, an engineering firm, is the engineer of record, advising the City and reviewing all the engineering and demolition plans. TRC is the environmental consultant, leading the development of the Non-Traditional Work Plan (NTWP) and staffing licensed asbestos professional staff throughout the demolition.

Consigli, a construction management firm, will be the general contractor leading and directing the work and managing their subcontractors. NorthStar, a qualified, highly experienced contractor, with experience in complex demolitions in dense, urban environments, will be performing the demolition.

**Q: Were the July 24 and October 22 Public Meetings recorded?**

**A:** Yes. The recordings are posted on the website.

- You can find the July 24 meeting here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q75hwVXUNZM&t=5s>



- You can find the October 22 meeting here:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-qYF29trrM&t=28s>

**Q: You mentioned direct abutters a number of times. Who are you considering a direct abutter and what does that mean for other residents that live close, but aren't necessarily a direct abutter?**

**A:** Direct abutters are residents that live adjacent to the building. When the City became involved in early June, we reached out to direct abutters to provide them with updates and answer as many of their questions as possible. While many people in the neighborhood have concerns, those residents that live closest to the building are the most impacted. We now have developed a website and have hosted three well-attended community meetings to make information available to the broader community.

**Q: I live in the vicinity of 221 Mt Auburn Street and I am worried about my safety before and during the demolition of the building. Should I move out? Will the City be providing financial assistance to neighbors before and/or during demolition due to health and safety concerns?**

**A:** The City has worked with the construction team and MassDEP to determine how best to demolish this building and protect public health and safety. The only residents who have received notice to vacate are the residents of 205 Mt Auburn Street.

Other than 205 Mt Auburn Street, there have not been any City orders or recommendations for residents to move out. We continue to share all the information we have on the condition of the building so that residents understand the situation and can make their own decisions.

**Q: Does the City require builders and developers of new construction to file a bond that covers risks associated with situations like this going forward?**

**A:** The most significant issues associated with this building go back over 60 years to the original construction. Any contractual or performance issues would be between the owner and the contractor. In addition, a Performance Bond would be highly unlikely to cover this type of situation so long after the end of construction.



**Q: Will the City seek restitution for demolition?**

**A:** The City will recover the costs associated with the demolition of the Riverview Condominiums. Massachusetts General Law (MGL) Chapter 143, Section 9 and Chapter 139, Section 3A empowers municipalities to collect expenses incurred in addressing public health or safety nuisances and hazards, such as this situation.

Following the completion of the demolition, the City will issue bills to all the unit owners of 221 Mt Auburn Street with their pro-rata share of the costs. Additionally, a statement of claim will be filed at the Registry of Deeds, placing a lien on the properties. Any charges that remain unpaid at the time of the FY27 tax billing (Fall 2026), will be added to the real estate tax bills of each condominium. Once added, these charges will be collected as part of the regular tax bill.

**Demolition: General Questions:**

**Q: Does this building really need to be demolished? Have all other options been carefully considered?**

**A:** The Condo Trust, City staff and various consultants have analyzed the building and found structural issues throughout. This situation is significantly different from a typical case where structural repairs might be focused on just one or two locations in a building.

The order of magnitude cost to repair this building is close to \$80 million. In addition to the prohibitive costs, given the structural concerns associated with the building, it is not feasible to have workers in the building performing that scale of construction.

Investigations from various firms and the City's Board of Survey have concluded that this building must be demolished to protect public health and safety. Learn more: [www.cambridgema.gov/221mtauburnst](http://www.cambridgema.gov/221mtauburnst)

**Q: What is the timeline of the demolition and any subsequent work?**

**A:** The City has proceeded expeditiously with both the legal and technical processes to support the City undertaking the demolition and addressing public health and safety concerns.

Preparatory work is ongoing and demolition is scheduled to occur between early December and the end of March. Final sitework will take approximately a month and is estimated to be completed at the end of April. Detailed schedules will be posted on the project website weekly throughout the demolition.



**Q: What are the standard construction hours? Will there be work during the holidays and weekends?**

**A:** Work will typically occur Monday–Friday, 7:00 AM–4:00 PM. The City’s noise ordinance allows work until 6:00 PM, so if the contractor is in the middle of an operation and it is safer to continue a bit later, they will do so. However, the typical day will end at 4:00 PM.

No evening or weekend work is currently proposed. If that changes, we will provide updates to residents.

**Q: What techniques will be used for the demolition? What are the structural implications for surrounding buildings? Does the demolition cause health concerns?**

**A:** The demolition will be conducted by NorthStar who has experience in complex demolition in dense, urban environments. See their work here:

<https://www.northstar.com/portfolio-list/>

NorthStar and the City team developed a demolition plan that is permitted through MassDEP for “non-traditional demolition.” The environmental consultant, TRC, addressed hazardous building materials, like asbestos, in the demolition plan. The demolition plan includes misting, air monitoring, vibration monitoring and other precautionary measures. The City held a public meeting on October 22 to discuss the demolition details, including the demolition plan, and to answer questions and address concerns. View the recorded presentation here:

<https://youtu.be/O-gYF29trrM>, or review the presentation slides here:

[https://www.cambridgema.gov/-](https://www.cambridgema.gov/-/media/Files/capitalbuildingprojects/october22,2025221mtauburnstcommunitymeeting.pdf)

[/media/Files/capitalbuildingprojects/october22,2025221mtauburnstcommunitymeeting.pdf](https://www.cambridgema.gov/-/media/Files/capitalbuildingprojects/october22,2025221mtauburnstcommunitymeeting.pdf)

The demolition will take place in 6 phases and will prioritize removing the portions closest to Sparks Street and 205 Mount Auburn Street residents, who are closest to the building.

**Q: Will the Bradbury Street building be demolished as well? What is the plan for that building? Are residents still living there?**

**A:** The Bradbury building is connected to Riverview by utilities and is part of the Riverview-in-Cambridge Condominium Association Trust, but does not have the same construction issues as 221 Mt Auburn St. Residents were evacuated from the Bradbury units by order of the Condo Trust in early July 2025, as utilities were being disconnected in preparation for demolition. The City’s role in



demolition is limited to addressing the public safety issues associated with 221 Mt Auburn Street; we will not be demolishing the Bradbury building.

### **Demolition: Dust, Air Quality, Asbestos & Vibration Monitoring**

#### **Q: What precautions are taken for asbestos in the building?**

**A:** Consistent with buildings constructed in the 1960s, there is asbestos-containing material in the building. The asbestos-containing material is generally in popcorn ceilings, floor tiles, etc.

MassDEP regulates building abatement, construction, and demolition projects that involve asbestos. The contractor, NorthStar, working with TRC (environmental consultant), Consigli and City staff, developed a demolition plan that includes measures protective of public health. MassDEP is in the process of reviewing and permitting the plan.

Demolition debris will be treated as asbestos-containing material and handled by licensed professionals under strict state and federal protocols. Air quality is monitored throughout the day to confirm safe operations.

#### **Q: Will air quality be monitored? And at what height will monitoring be performed? How will residents be notified if unsafe air quality is detected?**

**A:** Once the City has received the approved Non-Traditional Work Plan from MassDEP, we will post it on the project website. That plan includes various air quality requirements and thresholds.

Air samples will be collected throughout the day and analyzed at six perimeter locations as well as with mobile air quality units that vary in location, based on the demolition sequence. The results will be posted weekly. If levels exceed MassDEP thresholds, MassDEP will be notified immediately, and operations cannot continue until MassDEP approves adjustments to the operation.

#### **Q: Will asbestos risk vary throughout demolition?**

**A:** There will be less asbestos-containing building material and fewer structural points of potential failure as the building is demolished. However, asbestos materials are present throughout the building. All phases are managed using the same strict operations and monitoring standards.



**Q: How will dust be managed during demolition, especially on windy or snowy days? What happens to the debris and dust onsite on nights and weekends?**

**A:** Dust control is maintained by continuously wetting debris. Work will pause during gusts exceeding 30 mph or sustained winds over 25 mph. Major snowstorms or excessive snow loads could temporarily pause work, but work will resume as soon as it is safe to do so.

Dust control is one of the most important safety measures on site. Materials left on site will be moistened before crews leave. If needed, staff may be present over weekends. Concerns can be reported to the City (Kristen Kelleher: 617-349-4825) or through the non-emergency Police line: 617-349-3300.

**Q: What happens to the water used for dust suppression? How does the system function during freezing temperatures? And will there be enough water pressure for the Fire Department during the demolition?**

**A:** Water is applied to keep materials moist and control dust. The water used for suppression will be recaptured on-site and reused. Any remaining water will be managed and disposed of as asbestos-containing material. No water will enter the City's storm or drainage systems.

The dust suppression system includes freeze-prevention features and heated enclosures for hoses and equipment to prevent freezing in cold weather. The team has extensive experience using the water system for demolitions in freezing temperatures.

The project team has coordinated with the Fire Department, and there is adequate water flow from the hydrants being used for dust suppression.

**Q: Will vibration be an issue for nearby homes?**

**A:** Significant vibration is not expected since there will be no deep excavation. Vibration monitors will track activity, and work will stop if abnormal readings occur. Vibration monitors were installed at several surrounding properties to collect baseline data and track changes during demolition. Locations were chosen to represent different building types and distances.

**Q: How is worker safety being managed? Why do some workers wear full protective suits? Should residents be worried?**

**A:** NorthStar and Consigli have strong safety records. Only trained and certified personnel can enter asbestos-controlled zones. Workers undergo medical screenings, fit tests, and use full PPE where required.



Full PPE is required inside asbestos-controlled or structural exclusion zones (areas directly at the demolition site). This does not indicate a public health risk; it shows strict adherence to safety protocols for workers closest to the activity.

### **Demolition: Transport of Asbestos-Containing Material**

**Q: Will trucks use neighborhood streets? How many will travel from the site in a day and the whole project span? How heavy is each filled dump truck? And how will trucks be cleaned before leaving the site?**

**A:** Trucks will enter and exit on Mount Auburn Street and travel along major arterial routes. They will not use small residential streets. The team expects filling approximately 15 dump trucks a day, and approximately 400 throughout the span of the project. Each loaded truck will weigh approximately 30 tons, which is less than a fire truck weighs.

A truck wash station will be installed at the site exit. All vehicles will be washed and inspected to remove debris or soil before leaving the area.

**Q: How will debris be handled and where is it going?**

**A:** Debris will be loaded onto double-lined and sealed trucks and transported to a licensed, EPA-approved asbestos-accepting landfill in Westburg, Ohio, called Minerva Enterprises. This is one of the few facilities permitted to handle asbestos-containing material.

### **Demolition: Neighbor Impacts and Safety**

**Q: How is the demolition monitored for safety? And is there a risk of collapse during demolition?**

**A:** The City, contractors, and independent consultants will all have personnel on site daily. In addition, drones will be used to guide demolition activities without having to have personnel in the building.

Structural engineers have assessed the building and developed a phased plan to reduce risk. Monitoring will occur throughout the demolition process.

**Q: Will there be rodent control?**

**A:** Yes, the City and contractors have rodent control measures in place. However, since this is not deep excavation work, significant rodent activity is not expected.



**Q: What if I notice dust inside my home? Should residents close windows or stay indoors during demolition? Will air purifiers help?**

**A:** The air quality monitoring boundary is located at the site perimeter to protect public health.

No special precautions are required beyond standard comfort measures. However, residents may prefer to close windows during active demolition due to noise and general construction activity. Household air purifiers can improve general air quality but are not typically seen as effective for asbestos. The primary protection against asbestos exposure comes from on-site management procedures, including dust mitigation.

**Q: How loud will the demolition be?**

**A:** Demolition will be loud, but noise levels will comply with Section 8.16.070 of the Cambridge Noise Ordinance as it relates to construction. For residential properties, the maximum noise level is 86 dB(A). To see more details, visit: [https://library.municode.com/ma/cambridge/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=TIT8HESA\\_CH8.16NOCO\\_8.16.070RENOEMCOSI](https://library.municode.com/ma/cambridge/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT8HESA_CH8.16NOCO_8.16.070RENOEMCOSI)

**Temporary Traffic Detours/Closures:**

**Q: When will the road closures be lifted?**

**A:** The City is anticipating that the street closures will be in place through demolition. The City is continually monitoring this throughout construction, with the goal of opening up streets and sidewalks as soon as it is appropriate to do so.

**Q: Do any of these street detours and closures appear on Google maps?**

**A:** Yes, these closures are visible in Waze, Google Maps, and Apple Maps. This is the best way to reduce regional traffic in the immediate area.

**Q: Are buses, schools, and the hospital being coordinated with? Will emergency access be affected?**

**A:** Yes, the City has coordinated with Cambridge Public Schools, the BB&N School, the MBTA, and Mount Auburn Hospital to manage traffic and bus operations safely. The team coordinated closely with the hospital; adjustments were made to ensure ambulances have alternative access routes, and the hospital is in regular communication with the City.





**Q: Will I still be able to access Mount Auburn Hospital during the detours and road closures?**

**A:** Yes. We are coordinating closely with the hospital to maintain access and have posted signage to help people navigate the detours to the hospital. Mount Auburn Hospital is also conducting its own outreach efforts to inform its staff, patients, and other visitors of the detours and closures. Find the detour maps here: <https://www.cambridgema.gov/-/media/Files/Traffic/mt,-d-,auburnstdetours/mtauburnclosuremap2025.pdf>

**Q: On Brattle Street, traffic is dense, even before rush hour. Will you assess the timing of stoplights?**

**A:** We are continuing to monitor the detours and make adjustments as necessary to mitigate the added volumes.

**Q: Will you lift the No-Left-Turn onto Appleton off Brattle Street?**

**A:** No, we will be keeping the same traffic patterns in place at that intersection. Allowing the left turns would create more delay on Brattle Street, as left turning vehicles need to yield to westbound Brattle Street traffic, pedestrians walking along the north side of Brattle Street, as well as cyclists travelling in the 2-way separated bike lanes.

**Q: Will neighborhood streets see extra parking from workers?**

**A:** This project involves a relatively small crew (about 10–30 workers), so parking needs will be minimal and can be met on the private parcel.

**Q: Where can I park during this closure?**

**A:** Parking spots outside of the hard closure area will, in large part, remain the same. A map was shared at public meeting on July 24 of parking spaces in the nearby vicinity of the traffic closures.

**Q: Will there be police presence during the demolition?**

**A:** Yes, Police details will be stationed right around the construction zone for traffic safety and monitoring. The City is also evaluating increased patrols in the area due to the temporary vacancy of adjacent properties.

**Q: Are Memorial Drive improvements impacted?**

**A:** We are coordinating closely with DCR and their scheduled improvements on Memorial Drive are proceeding. Visit the DCR project webpage to learn more: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/memorial-drive-greenway-improvements-phase-iii>



### **Post Demolition & New Development:**

#### **Q: Will the site be fenced after demolition and what happens to the foundation?**

**A:** Once demolition is complete and the building is removed, the lot will be stabilized, with minor paving repairs made for drainage. The fencing will likely remain until redevelopment begins. Foundations will remain in place and be addressed with future redevelopment of the site.

#### **Q: What is the process and timeline for new construction?**

**A:** There is no identified timeline for the redevelopment of the site at this time. The current focus is on the demolition of the building and prioritizing public health and public safety. Once the City completes the demolition, it will be up to the owners to determine how to proceed with the site, consistent with zoning and other ordinances. The owners anticipate that it will take approximately 1 year for them to obtain the necessary legal authority to convert the property out of condominium ownership and thus be eligible to be sold/redeveloped.

#### **Q: How big is the site and what is the existing zoning for the parcel?**

**A:** The parcel is approximately 2 acres and the existing buildings are just over 100,000 square feet. The entire site is zoned residential.

Below is a high-level description of the 2 residential zoning districts that cover the site, however, it is important to note that there are many nuances associated with zoning and development that would be worked through as part of a redevelopment process.

- ☐ The section of the site **along Mt. Auburn Street** is zoned **Residence C-2**, which allows multifamily housing up to 7 stories above grade (85 feet).
- ☐ The **rear section** of the site is zoned **Residence C-1**, which allows multifamily housing up to 6 stories above grade (74 feet), if the housing complies with inclusionary housing requirements.
- ☐ **Inclusionary housing** means that some units are required to be affordable to low- and moderate-income households.
- ☐ All developments of at least 10,000 square feet or 10 units of housing must meet inclusionary housing requirements.

New projects that are larger than 75,000 square feet require special permit approval by the Planning Board, including a transportation impact study and public hearings.

