



INMAN SQUARE INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT CONSTRUCTION UPDATE SEPTEMBER 2019

Dear Inman Square Neighbor,

The City is pleased to provide this second **Construction Update** for the Inman Square improvements project. During the duration of the Project, we will transmit occasional high-level project **Updates**, such as this one, as well as more frequent **Notices** that will detail specific short-term construction operations impacting various portions of Inman Square as construction progresses.

We know that living, working, operating a business, and traveling through an active construction project is challenging. We truly appreciate all the efforts that the Inman Square community and local businesses have put forth so far during the planning, design and initial construction activities of the Project. We join you in looking forward to a successful project, which will improve safety for people walking, biking and driving through the Square and enhance the public open space in Inman Square.



Rendering of Vellucci Plaza from the street.

The City is committed to working with the Inman Square community and local businesses throughout the Project. We encourage you to reach out to us with any questions, concerns, or suggestions about construction; visit the Project website; and attend planned community events. We have implemented a pilot construction mitigation program to support small businesses (see page 3) and encourage you to continue to support the local businesses that make Inman Square unique.

Sincerely,

Katherine Watkins, P.E.
City Engineer



A "bird's-eye view" of Vellucci Plaza looking north to Hampshire Street after construction is complete.

What is the Inman Square project?

In 2015, the City began a process of studying the Inman Square intersection to develop short- and long-term improvements for what is one of the City's highest crash-rate locations. These crashes have involved all modes of travel through Inman Square (vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles), and improving the safety of Inman Square has been an extremely high priority and is aligned with Cambridge's **Vision Zero** commitment to eliminate transportation-related injuries and fatalities.



Findings from the initial study were presented to the community in mid-2016, and short-term improvements including restrictions on left-turns and bicycle intersection markings were implemented in summer and fall 2016. These short-term improvements did not involve significant construction, and have always been considered an interim measure until a more permanent solution could be implemented.

The process of designing permanent improvements to Inman Square began in late 2016, and continued throughout 2017 and 2018. Several different design options were developed and analyzed, and six widely attended public meetings were held. The Plan addresses the safety and operational issues of Inman Square, and meets other project goals including improving transit operations and experience, maximizing the quality and experience of pedestrian plaza space, and providing necessary parking and loading functions.

Key components of the plan include:

- Improved and more conventional intersection geometry
- Separated bicycle lanes and protected bicycle crossings
- Additional pedestrian crosswalks and protected pedestrian signal phases
- Improved signage and markings
- Peak hour dedicated bus lane and improved bus stop locations and bus routing
- Restoration of high demand left turn movements for vehicles
- Extensive tree plantings in immediate project area, Springfield Street parking lot, and nearby neighborhood streets to mitigate tree removal
- Pervious and light-colored paving materials to improve stormwater quality and reduce the urban heat island effect

This concept in its basic form, is shown below. For a much more detailed look at the design, including its extensive landscape, urban design and public arts components, we encourage you to visit:

www.cambridgema.gov/theworks/inmansquare

and click on the "Documents" tab to view the October 24, 2018 community meeting presentation.



Community Outreach and Construction Mitigation

The City is committed to maintaining clear communications and minimizing impacts to residential and commercial abutters, throughout the construction phase. Ongoing outreach and mitigation activities include the following:

Business Mitigation: DPW and the Community Development Department’s Economic Development Division are collaborating with the East Cambridge Business Association (ECBA), Inman Square Neighborhood Association (ISNA), Cambridge Chamber of Commerce, and Cambridge Local First on a business impact mitigation plan. The plan includes:

- Ongoing electronic and printed communications and periodic surveys of individual businesses to learn about critical operations issues
- A “Preparing Your Business for Construction” workshop, which was held on January 14, 2019
- Small business coaching offered on financial planning, insurance, and legal services
- Individual meetings with business owners on construction questions
- A “Shop Local” customer loyalty program with **26 participating businesses and over 300 participants since March 2019**
- Co-hosting (with ECBA) a “Second Thursdays in Inman Square” monthly event to attract customers to the Square
- Installation of banners, planters, tree lights
- Distributing over 1,500 reusable “I ♥ Inman Square” shopping bags to neighbors and at events to remind everyone to shop local during construction
- Wayfinding and promotional signage and distribution of promotional materials
- Monthly “coffee-talk” drop-in sessions with City and Contractor staff and attendance at regular ECBA meetings (see below)
- Temporary changes to area parking regulations, including re-striping of the Springfield lot to accommodate new spaces



Upcoming Coffee Talks: These are informal drop-in sessions held throughout the construction season, where DPW and Contractor staff are available to answer questions/concerns about the construction process and provide updates about upcoming work. The next session is as follows:

- **October 2, 2019, 10:00-11:30 AM | Gather Here, 1343 Cambridge Street**



City Staff engage with the public at Inman Square Eats and Crafts in May 2019.

Updates and Notices: DPW is disseminating electronic and written communications throughout the duration of the project. These include periodic general “Updates” (such as this); and more specific “Notices” which alert the community to imminent operations in the field and related impacts to roadways, crosswalks, sidewalks, and parking. Updates and Notices are posted on the project website www.cambridgema.gov/theworks/inmansquare and are emailed to those on the Project contact list. Visit the website to be added to this contact list. In addition, hard-copies of Updates and Notices are distributed to residents and businesses as appropriate.

Construction Activity Update

Construction began in early 2019 and has a total duration of approximately 24 months. Work activities include:

Eversource Gas Construction

Began February 2019 — 75% Complete

Eversource Gas and their Contractors began work in early 2019. They have completed their work in Springfield Street, in the “upper” portion of Hampshire Street and the existing Vellucci Plaza, and across Cambridge Street into Antrim Street. Their remaining work includes a new main along Hampshire Street running south from Inman Square. More detailed Notices regarding this next phase will be distributed to abutters and those on the project email list, and posted on the DPW website, prior to start of work.



Sewer and Drain Video Inspection and Pipe Lining/Repairs

Began Summer 2019 — 75% Complete

Earlier this year, City Contractors inserted mobile cameras into sewer and drain pipes from various manholes in Inman Square. This allowed for identification of pipe interiors that could be repaired and/or re-lined using “trenchless” technology, which is minimally disruptive to street operations. This repair work is being performed on an ongoing basis when it does not conflict with Eversource construction or other ongoing activities in the Square.



Bus 91 Reroute

Fall 2019

As part of the Inman Square project, and as presented at public meetings, the MBTA #91 bus will be permanently rerouted to Prospect Street around October 1. The reroute will include new stops on Prospect Street in Somerville and Cambridge, and will allow for faster and more reliable service on this route. The MBTA and the cities of Somerville and Cambridge will be distributing more detailed notifications in September regarding this upcoming change.



Inman Square Reconstruction

October 2019

The main DPW project for Inman Square was bid over the spring, and the firm of Newport Construction has been selected as the General Contractor. Newport is finalizing its proposed detailed schedule and sequence and is working with the City on early required technical submittals. It is anticipated that Newport will install tree protection, perform tree-pruning and begin work in Springfield Street during the first week of October. Starting with required utility and parking lot work at Springfield Street will minimize conflicts with the current Eversource work that is continuing along Hampshire Street.



During the course of the Newport contract, work will be performed in phases around the Square. Detailed Notices regarding upcoming work will be distributed to abutters and those on the project email list, and posted on the DPW website, prior to the start of each major phase of work.

QUESTIONS?

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