



The Willard Street Drainage Improvement Project includes replacing and/or rehabilitating the sewer and stormwater infrastructure and the construction of a new stormwater pipe and outfall at the Charles River, evaluation and implementation of stormwater best management practices, and water main replacement. The project also provides an opportunity to provide surface improvements, including accessible sidewalks, traffic calming, enhanced stormwater treatment, and improved conditions for bicycles.

During 2017, the City's consultant team developed several options to achieve the goals of improved stormwater management and surface conditions. Three community meetings were conducted, and two basic concepts were formally presented:

- One-Way (Northbound) Traffic with Maximum "Green Infrastructure"
- Two-Way Traffic with Limited "Green Infrastructure"

Although there were significant differences between the two options, it is important to note that either option would achieve the primary goal of the Project, which is to reduce incidences of stormwater-induced flooding which impacts both the street itself as well as adjacent properties.

For More Information...

If you would like to join an email distribution list to receive further information and updates on the Willard Street Drainage Improvement Project, please visit bit.ly/WillardSt.

Additional project information, including meeting notes, plans, and other background materials will continue to be posted at www.cambridgema.gov/theworks/willardst.

Please visit this website, or reach out to the Project Manager, Jerry Friedman, P.E., at 617-349-9720, or via email at jfriedman@cambridgema.gov, with any questions or concerns.

Community Feedback

The One-Way option was initially developed and studied at the suggestion of several community members during the first community meeting in March 2017. While this option did offer certain stormwater and aesthetic benefits, there were concerns expressed that this option would inconvenience neighborhood residents, and exacerbate parking and traffic issues on nearby streets such as Brown and Foster. There were also concerns expressed that not all of the most directly impacted residents of Willard Street, Willard Street Court, and Dinsmore Court had been heard from.



Informational Flyer and Neighborhood House Calls

During December 2017, the City distributed an informational flyer which described the two design concepts in some detail, and attempted to answer several Frequently Asked Questions. The flyer was distributed to residents of Willard Street, Willard Street Court, and Dinsmore Court, and was followed by house-to-house visits to these same three streets. These visits and follow-up emails were successful in that we were able to personally communicate with close to 90% of the households most likely to be directly impacted by the proposed designs.

It was great to be able to personally and frankly discuss the preferences and concerns of the neighborhood. **In the end, it became clear to us that there did not exist the clear level of support necessary to implement the significant changes which the One-Way Option would entail, particularly given the fact that the Two-Way Option would also achieve the main flood reduction goals of the Project.** Therefore, the City is proceeding with the Two-Way Option.

FYI - Other Nearby City Projects

The City intends to install a traffic signal at the intersection of Sparks and Mt. Auburn Streets. This is expected to provide significant benefits to Sparks Street traffic, which currently has difficulty turning onto Mt. Auburn. **This work will be performed as part of the Willard Street project, as this provides cost efficiencies as compared to mobilizing a separate contractor.**

The City also intends, in 2018, to begin a community outreach and design process to develop safety improvements for the intersection of **Brattle/Sparks/Craigie Streets**. This effort will be led by the Traffic, Parking and Transportation Department, and is separate from the Willard Street project.

Recap of the Two-Way Option

Stormwater and Utility Features

- Provides new, larger storm drain pipes and additional catch basins. The new pipes are sized for the increasingly intense rainstorms which the New England area experiences, and will continue to experience, in the coming years.
- Re-routes stormwater flows from Willard Street and upland areas north of Brattle Street into a new stormwater-only outfall to the Charles River. Presently, these flows are routed into an MWRA sewer in Mt. Auburn Street, and ultimately conveyed to the Deer Island Sewage Treatment Plant. The MWRA sewer is over-capacity during many storm events, causing backups onto Willard Street. In addition, the City is paying MWRA for unnecessary treatment of stormwater at the Deer Island facility.
- Provides tree trenches and other Green Infrastructure on the west side of the street. These features help cleanse the stormwater of certain pollutants, notably phosphorous, before the water is discharged to the Charles River.
- Replaces existing obsolete water main.
- Replaces existing obsolete gas main (this main is owned by Eversource, and work was completed in 2017).



Surface Features

- Maintains two-way traffic circulation for vehicles and bicycles. Following completion of utility work, the roadway will be reconstructed to its existing layout and dimensions. There will be one 10-foot travel lane in each direction, and a 7-foot parking lane on the west side of the street.
- Reconstructs sidewalks on both sides of Willard Street, providing a smooth accessible surface for all users. Sidewalk/tree zone width will remain the same as today, approximately 6-feet on each side of the street. There may be some limited opportunities for additional tree plantings along the street, but the goal would be to avoid creation of any new sidewalk “pinch points” of substandard width.
- Provides traffic calming/pedestrian priority elements including: curb extensions; raised intersection at Foster Street; raised side-street treatments at Brattle, Mt. Auburn, Dinsmore, and Willard Street Court
- Adds “Shared Lane Markings” for bicycles. This treatment, along with proposed traffic calming treatments described above, is consistent with Cambridge Bicycle Plan vision for low-volume/low-speed neighborhood streets such as Willard Street.
- Repaves Willard Street Court and Dinsmore Court. These are both private ways, but City will repave due to the planned disturbance of both streets for utility construction.



Next Steps & Schedule

The design team will continue the process of refining the design, preparing construction documents, and obtaining necessary permits throughout the remainder of the winter and spring of 2018.

The following permits and approvals are required before the project can be bid for construction. All relevant permitting agencies have already been briefed on the project and have offered initial input on the design:

- **Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR):** License for construction on their property (Memorial Drive and the adjacent Charles River parkland)
- **Cambridge Conservation Commission:** Order of Conditions for portions of work within the 100-year flood zone, and for work adjacent to and within the Charles River.
- **Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MADEP):** Chapter 91 Waterways License for construction of new drainage outfall at Charles River
- **US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE):** Construction General Permit for work within navigable waterway (Charles River).
- **Cambridge Historical Commission:** Certificates of Appropriateness for work in Half Crown-Marsh Conservation District (primarily west side of Willard Street) and Old Cambridge Historic District (primarily east side of Willard Street).
- **Massachusetts Architectural Access Board:** Variance for narrow sidewalk width at one location where existing tree prevents full compliance.

Upon successful completion of permitting, it is anticipated that the project will be put out to bid during the summer of 2018, and that **construction will begin in the fall of 2018.**

Continued Community Outreach

We continue to welcome community input on this important project. Please use the email addresses found at the beginning of this flyer to offer your comments and concerns. In addition, the following formal community events are envisioned. Details including times and dates will be publicized when finalized:

- **Landscape Site Walk - Spring 2018:** Join members of our design team as we discuss potential landscape improvements for Willard Street, including street trees and other plantings. We will discuss potential improvements within the public right-of-way, as well as the City’s voluntary private property “back of sidewalk” tree planting program.
- **Final Design/Pre-Construction Open House - Fall 2018:** After a Contractor has been selected, but before construction begins, we will present the final design in more detail, and explain the Contractor’s anticipated construction activities, schedule, and the types of disruptions which may be expected. Key members of the City and Contractor team will be present at this event, and we encourage community members to attend so that they can meet the construction team and inform us of specific concerns they may have.

We recognize that as we move into construction, there may be some impacts, including temporary traffic detours, temporary loss of parking, noise, etc., that might be felt beyond Willard Street, Willard Street Court, and Dinsmore Court. Therefore, beginning with this flyer, we are broadening our general outreach to include residents of Foster Street, Foster Place, and Brown Street. Of course, dependent on specific construction activities and impacts during the course of the work, we may further expand our outreach to include other nearby streets as well.

