



## City of Cambridge Department of Public Works

*John F. Nardone, Commissioner*

147 Hampshire Street  
Cambridge, MA 02139  
theworks@cambridgema.gov

Voice: 617 349 4800

TDD: 617 499 9924

## DPW Site Plan Review Requirements

These requirements are relevant for all Building Permits that require DPW Site Plan Review for impact to the public way, trees, addressing, utility connections etc.

If DPW Plan Review is required, the following is a list of items that need to be addressed by the Project Applicant in advance of DPW sign off on the pre-approval of the Building Permit Application. Please note that these are general requirements. Different projects vary in scope -- these requirements might not be applicable to all, or additional requirements may apply.

Submission to the DPW should include, but is not limited to, a Civil Engineering Site/Utility Plan, project narrative and any other required documents to address the items below. Plans must be stamped by Commonwealth of MA Registered Professional Civil Engineer or Land Surveyor. The engineering design must conform to all applicable standards and good engineering practice.

### General

Site plans should show:

- Property boundary and easements.
- Existing and proposed topography, including spot grades and contour elevations (using Cambridge City Base (CCB= NAVD1988 +11.66' or NGVD1929 +10.84')). Existing topography should capture at a minimum 10-feet beyond the property boundary.
- Addressing: On the Site Plan, clearly identify entrances to new units or tenant spaces for address assignment. Please submit a formal request to the DPW for addressing with architectural floor plans detailing all proposed building entrances and all proposed units.
- Please note in Cambridge utility connections are owned from the building to the main in the right-of-way and shall be maintained by the property owner. Operation and maintenance of utility connections to the main shall be incorporated into any relevant condo association documents, etc. prior to sale of units.
- Plans shall reference the City of Cambridge standard details for construction of public infrastructure and utility connections in the right-of-way.
- The property boundary shall be established by a Licensed Land Surveyor with physical marketings (pins, stakes, etc.) prior to the start of construction for any project with any work proposed within 5-feet of the property boundary.
- Civil site plans shall be coordinated with all Architectural, Landscape, Plumbing, etc. plans. Changes in the Site Plan as a result of DPW review shall be coordinated with all consultants.

- Identify and delineate location and type of erosion & sediment control measures (silt fence, hay bales, straw wattles, etc.).

### Constructability

- Plans shall consider impacts onto abutting properties.
- Demolition close to the public right-of-way may require vibration monitoring.

### As-Built Plan

- After construction is completed, an as-built plan and a CAD file of the as-built plan shall be submitted to DPW showing all building and utility as-built locations. The plan must be signed by the design engineer or land surveyor.
- Closed or modifications to curb cuts must be noted on the As-Built Plan.

### Utility Information

New utility connections must be approved by the DPW. Utility work planned for the property must be shown on the site plan including Standard Construction Details for sewer, water, and drainage work. Standard details can be found at: [Construction Standards - City of Cambridge, MA](#)

- Existing and proposed utility services shall have adequate horizontal and vertical separation.
  - All utility services shall be set back a minimum 2-feet from the property boundary.
  - All utilities shall be accessible for long-term operation and maintenance.
  - The sanitary sewer service shall have at least 10-feet horizontal separation from any existing or proposed water services. Proposals for less than 10-feet of separation may require additional protection to be reviewed by DPW.
  - All other utility services shall have at a minimum 1-foot horizontal separation and/or 18-inch vertical separation.

### Sewer

- New service proposed. Must show location, size, material, connection detail, inverts at building and main, profile (for services 8" or larger, or as needed to confirm/identify conflicts). Note there is a required one-time Sewer Connection Fee for new or replaced plumbing fixtures.
- Projects proposing to reuse existing sanitary sewer services shall provide the DPW with a pipe inspection video DPW for review. The Site Plan shall provide the size, location, material, and inverts of the existing service to be reused.
- Existing sewer services that have significant defects such as breaks, fractures, deformation or infiltration must be repaired or replaced. Existing service to be abandoned must be cut and capped at main.
- Basement plumbing fixtures: backflow preventers (backwater valves) are required at each below-grade plumbing fixture, add note to plan. For more information see [backflow brochure](#).

- Floor drains in covered parking areas must discharge to an oil water separator connected to the sanitary sewer. MWRA must be notified prior to installation of the oil/water separator.
- Commercial kitchen/food preparation services: Food preparation facilities are required to have point of use or exterior grease traps. Grease trap sizing calculations must be submitted. For Fats, Oil, Grease (FOG) Controls, provide design, sizing, O&M Plan and signage per code.
- Sanitary sewer connection in the right-of-way shall be per the City of Cambridge construction standards. Chimney/Saddle connections are not allowed.

## Water

- Any proposed water work must be coordinated with the Cambridge Water Department.
- Site plans should show:
  - New service proposed (location, size, material, connection detail).
  - Existing service to be abandoned (cut and cap location).
  - Existing service to be reused (location, size, material).

## Drainage and Stormwater Management

- Confirmation of separation of drainage and sanitary sewer pipes inside the building.
- Roof drain and/or downspout routing and discharge points. Roof runoff or site runoff discharge to sanitary sewer, abutting properties or sidewalk is not allowed.
- Plans to detail any sump pump locations and their discharge points, if proposed. For projects that propose sump pumps and are lowering the basement floor elevation, the engineer must provide an estimate of seasonal groundwater pumping rate. The pumping rate should be considered in the infiltration system design. Sump pump discharge must go to an infiltration system on site with an overflow to the City storm drain, or overflow at-grade if feasible to retain within the site. Sump pump discharge to sanitary sewer, abutting properties or sidewalk is not allowed.
- Proposed subsurface infiltration systems shall be set back a minimum of five (5) feet from any property boundary, and a minimum of ten (10) feet from an existing building on an abutting property. Structures on abutting properties and their foundations shall be detailed on the Existing Conditions Plan and Site Plan.
- Impacts onto abutters: The project narrative should include a certification statement from the design engineer that the drainage design was evaluated for impacts onto abutters and that there are no impacts onto abutting properties.
- For stormwater management requirements, refer to the September 2026 Supplemental Directive posted on the [DPW's Stormwater Website](#).

## Private Utilities

- Site plans should show:
  - Existing utilities to be abandoned (gas, electric, tele/com, etc.).

- New services to be provided (gas, electric, telecom; location and size) and their connection locations in the public right-of-way.
  - Other utility infrastructure locations (transformers/switch gears).
- Confirm if an existing gas connection to an existing building is to remain or be removed per the City of Cambridge Fossil Fuel Free Ordinance. If being removed, the Site Plan shall detail the service to be cut and capped at the main.
- Pole and Conduit approvals required for new underground conduit (electric, tele/com).

## Public Right-of-Way & Other Surface Impacts

- Sidewalk restoration and roadway restoration (2-inch mill and overlay) from curb-to-curb are required to be detailed on the Site Plan along the frontage of the property for projects that are proposing three or more utility excavations into the right-of-way. Recently resurfaced sidewalks and roadways may have additional mitigation requirements.

### Roadway

- All proposed utility work.
- Existing and proposed pavement markings and signage in the right-of-way shall be detailed on the Site Plan. Disturbed pavement markings and signage in the right-of-way shall be restored in-kind.
- Site Plan shall detail proposed curb cuts or any modifications to or abandonment of existing curb cuts. Proposed curb cuts and modifications to existing curb cuts require approval from ISD and City Council prior to issuance of the Building Permit. New curb cuts cannot be shown on building permit plans until a curb cut permit is obtained.

### Sidewalks

- Work within the right-of-way shall be ADA compliant and constructed in accordance to the City of Cambridge's specifications and details. The Site Plan shall include sufficient existing and proposed topography details to demonstrate the sidewalk will be ADA compliant in the proposed condition.
- Any excavation within 4 feet of the public ROW shall consider adjacent right-of-way and abutting property impacts. Excavation work may require the submission of a support of excavation plan with the Excavation Permit.
- Properties that are reconstructing sidewalk at street intersections are required to set a survey marker at the intersection of the two rights-of-way. Marker must be set by a Land Surveyor and be shown on the as-built plan.

### Trees

- Site Plan shall detail the size, location, and canopy of any existing Public Shade Trees (street trees located in the adjacent public right-of-way) and existing Significant Trees as defined in the City of Cambridge Tree Protection Ordinance (TPO), Title 8, Chapter 8.66, of the City's Municipal Code on the subject property and within 10-feet of the property

boundary on abutting properties. A Significant Tree is any tree on a private property that has a diameter of 6 inches or greater at 4.5 feet above the ground.

- Applicant shall review potential for permanent and temporary construction related impacts to the roots, trunk, and canopy of Public Shade Trees and Significant Trees on private property. Any impacts onto the roots, trunk or canopy of Public Shade Trees or Significant Trees on private property shall be clearly detailed on the Site Plan.
  - No impacts are allowed to Public Shade Trees. Public Shade Trees (Street Trees located in the Public Way) are regulated under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 87. Potential impacts to roots, trunk, or canopy of Public Shade Trees shall be reviewed with the City Arborist.
  - Impacts to the roots, trunk, or canopy of Significant Trees on the subject parcel shall be identified and detailed on the Site Plans.
  - Impacts to the roots, trunk, or canopy of Significant Trees on abutting properties shall identified and detailed on the Site Plan and be reviewed and coordinated with the abutting property owners.
- Plan must call out trees to be protected and have the City of Cambridge tree protection detail.
- Work within 3 feet of a Public Shade Tree requires the Contractor to contact the City Arborist in advance.
- Evaluate opportunities for new trees.

## Flood Resiliency Standards

Any project that is subject to the Flood Resilience Standards (Section 22.80 of the City's Zoning Bylaws) requirements will need to submit a package of materials to be reviewed for compliance before a building permit (or special permit, if applicable) is issued. The package will include elevation drawings of the building showing the applicable LTFEs on the site and a description of how vulnerable areas will be protected. For more information on Flood Resiliency Standards and Applying for A Flood Resilience Compliance Confirmation please view the Flood Resilience Compliance Guidance Document in Flooding Resilience Standards. The review shall be completed and attached to the Building Permit Application.

[Flood Resilience Compliance Guidance Document](#)

## City of Cambridge References and Links:

### Webpages

- [Department of Public Works home page](#)
- [DPW Engineering Services](#)
- [DPW Sewer Division](#)
- [Inspectional Services Department home page](#)
- [DPW Stormwater Management](#)
- [DPW Urban Forestry Division](#)

### Regulations and Guidance

- [Land Disturbance Regulations](#) (revised Sept 2026)
- [Wastewater and Stormwater Use Regulations](#) (revised Feb 2026)
- [Resiliency Flood Elevations Regulations](#)
- [Wastewater and Stormwater Management Guidance](#), including the September 2026 Supplemental Directive for Stormwater Management
- [Construction Standards and Standard Details](#)

### Resources

- [Flood Viewer](#)
- [Online City GIS Viewer \(AxisGIS\)](#)
- [Flooding Risk brochure](#)
- [Backwater valve brochure](#)
- [Fats, Oils, and Grease brochure](#)