

**Harding & Wallingford Intersection Reconfiguration
(as part of) the 2025 Miscellaneous Utilities Project**

Public Engagement Meeting

Questions and Comments

Nov. 14, 2024

6-7:30 p.m.

Attendance: Participants (20) / Staff (3)

General Remarks

- The main purpose of this meeting was to inform residents about the upcoming road and utility project on Harding and how it will impact the Harding/Wallingford intersection. The project will begin construction in Spring 2025. For this one-and-a-half-hour session, City staff shared the project details and proposed road reconfiguration design, as well as answered questions that residents submitted.
- Residents were able to type comments and questions. Most questions were read and answered live.
- All questions are answered below. If answers below differ from the answers given in the meeting, the answers in this document take precedence.
- The comments submitted by residents were not read live, but they were shared with staff and are summarized below.
- The design proposal shared at the meeting is available on the project website, [here](#).

Update

- Staff considered the feedback from the meeting, as well as further internal evaluation, and determined that alternative designs for the intersection to meet both the neighborhood's aesthetic concerns and the City's safety goals will be developed.
- **An in-person public engagement meeting will be held in early February to share the new design(s) and gather feedback on minor details of the designs.**
- More information on the meeting will be posted to the website closer to the meeting date.

Intersection Reconfiguration

Questions and Answers

1. The confluence of Wallingford, Harding and Hermitage is so iconic and lovely. Why is there a need to change the beautiful curvature that exists?

The shape of the new intersection will be redesigned to keep more of the curvature in the intersection. The goal of the reconfiguration is to narrow the crosswalk distance to implement the City's vision of safety for all transportation modes. Other reasons include:

- The current intersection does not follow the City's standard design and since the utility project will remove the asphalt, this opportunity should be utilized to bring the intersection to current standards.
- There will be less asphalt to be maintained.
- Snowplow operations will be more efficient.
- The reconfiguration will have less impervious (paved) surface than the current configuration, which aligns with the City's A2zero goals.
- The new greenspace provides additional locations for trees to be added to the neighborhood.

2. Is there any data on crashes, speeding, and/or resident complaints to support the need for traffic calming or this project?

There was one reported crash over the past 10 years. The crash involved a parked vehicle and there was not injury. Vehicle speeds were not collected as the blocks are relatively short and all approaches have curves. City has not received resident complaints on speeds near the subject intersection.

3. There's no traffic, no study that proves there's an issue, and no history of accidents; what is the need for the change?

Per Resolution R-23-330, City staff have been directed to proactively evaluate traffic calming measures to in attempt to provide safe travel environment for uses of all modes. While there has not been reported crashes or speeding issues at the subject intersections, the planned underground utilities project provides an opportunity to reduce the size of the intersection, the length of pedestrian crossing and the area of impervious surface. These measures reduce the exposure of users to crash risks. Students attending Tappan Middle School or Burns Park Elementary may walk or bike at this intersection.

4. No one in the neighborhood thinks this is a safety issue and no one in our neighborhood wants this, so, why are we doing this?

See responses to questions above for reasons for the designs and see comments below of support from the residents for the reconfiguration.

City Council Resolution R-23-330 directs staff to evaluate traffic calming opportunities as part of capital projects, regardless of traffic calming petition status. The traffic calming opportunity here is to reduce the crosswalk distance and the amount of asphalt in the Wallingford/Harding intersection. There are many ways to achieve this goal. Based on feedback from the meeting and staff evaluation of the proposed design, a new design will be developed and shared with residents in early February.

5. We don't want the information without a chance to give our point of view. So, in our opinion this [meeting] is not a constructive use of time because it already assumes that this project is moving forward. We were told that there was no plan yet and clearly there is. Why would you come to this meeting with this plan without having engaged those who were impacted the most?

A plan was developed based on policy direction from City Council Resolution R-23-330, which directs staff to evaluate traffic calming opportunities as part of capital projects, regardless traffic calming petition status. Staff is happy to discuss details of the plan with residents, but not whether or not modifications will be made to the intersection.

The intersection will be redesigned. To share your opinion of the shared design or the elements you would prefer in the new design, please contact the project manager, Tracy Anderson.

6. Don't you have to take into consideration/opinions of the neighborhood? If not here, when and how are the neighbors', objections taken into consideration for approval?

Resident considerations and opinions will help refine the design, but not the overall direction of implementing traffic calming measures as part of capital projects that significantly disturb existing road surface. The design is based on staff's professional opinion on how to make streets safe for all users. Resident objections to the entire intersection reconfiguration will not be entertained, however, staff will work with residents on the details of the design.

Resident feedback was taken into consideration and a new design will be developed. The intersection will still be reconfigured, but staff is committed to finding a design to meet both the City's safety goals (narrowed crosswalk) and the neighborhood aesthetic concerns.

7. Is it city policy to rearrange intersections where there is no problem rather than address known problems like potholes?

The changes at this intersection are being considered because of the adjacent utility project on Harding. Funding for this project does not compete with maintenance activities such as pothole filling.

8. Would the new width of the street at the intersection still support two cars at the same time?

Yes, two cars will be able to pass each other in the intersection. The road width of the intersection will be 22 feet, the same as the width of the road past the intersection.

9. Will there be a crossing path for pedestrians to cross Wallingford from Harding?

No, the only pedestrian crossing will continue to be across Harding. A crossing of Wallingford could be considered in the future when Wallingford is resurfaced.

10. What should residents do if they are concerned about the design of the new curve and fearful about its impact on their property?

The design will not impact any private property. The limits of the project are fully within the City right-of-way. To discuss details of the design and concerns about the new design, residents may contact the project manager, Tracy Anderson.

11. How do we get a face-to-face dialogue on this?

An in-person meeting will be held in early February to share the new design(s) and gather feedback on the details of the design(s). A final design will be developed based on the feedback collected, the layout of the underground utilities in the intersection, and staff's professional opinion.

12. Who is the final decision maker?

The decision to reconfigure the intersection has been made by Engineering staff. However, the final decision-making authority on all municipal matters lies with City Council.

13. Is the reconfiguration based primarily on safety or the new water main? Why?

The reconfiguration is mainly based on safety; however, the water main work also benefits from the reconfiguration due to the different layout of the storm sewers with the new curb line.

14. Why not reallocate some of the funds for reconfiguring the curve at Wallingford to otherwise repaving the roads in the neighborhood (Austin - Scottwood - Wallingford - Harding) which are, largely, in dreadful shape? As a bicyclist, I feel that these are some of the safest roads to ride on from a traffic perspective, but from an actual quality standpoint, they are dangerous. Shouldn't we fix the problems?

The project is focused on the Wallingford/Harding intersection because the planned underground utility project on Harding from Morton to Wallingford will already be significantly disturbing the road. The money that would be saved from not reconfiguring the intersection is relatively minor and would not provide enough funding for any significant additional street resurfacing.

The Ives Woods neighborhood is on the City's Resurfacing Program list for 2027. The list of streets to be resurfaced has not yet been determined.

Comments

1. We oppose the road change decision. The utility project is something separate. Please leave the road shape alone. The original plan of the neighborhood has this road shape in mind. The road conditions are unacceptable and cause bike and non-motorized accidents and do damage to motor vehicles.
2. Agree with the entire proposal. Excellent work, folks.
3. From many of our perspectives, by doing it because 'it doesn't cost that much' even though it is admittedly not necessary', doesn't seem like use a good use of our tax dollars or public works. The crosswalk could be moved back a little bit, we don't need to do this. It's wasteful and it makes our neighborhood worse.
4. I regularly see lots of kids walking to Tappan and using the crosswalk, so it makes sense to make it shorter, for their safety, to me.

5. The crosswalk has been reduced in recent years by angling it toward Harding. I walk in this area every day and think that the proposed change would be aesthetically unattractive. Given the nature of the neighborhood this should be a serious consideration.
 6. I hear that you're justifying this for bike safety — from a rider's perspective, these big, open, calm roads are a beautiful thing. That curve is an asset, not a liability. Please listen to our feedback on this.
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Harding Utility Project

Questions and Answers

- 1. Some of our Harding neighbors have their main water valves in our lawn area, will that now be amended?**

Yes, each house on Harding will have a water shut off valve and access box located in the lawn extension (between curb and sidewalk) within the house's property lines. Any non-compliant valve access boxes currently outside of these limits will be removed.

- 2. Will we need to remove and replace our driveway and reconnect our water and sewer connections?**

No, all the work is confined to the City right-of-way limits (approximately back of sidewalk to back of sidewalk). Anything, including driveways, that must be removed for the project will be replaced as part of the project at no expense to the homeowner.

- 3. Could you help everyone understand the ramifications to having non-conforming? sewer lines as they are currently? Essentially, is this project truly necessary?**

All sanitary leads in the City are the responsibility of the property owner from the house all the way to the city's sewer main, even in public the right-of-way. If the sewer lead fails, it could back up into the road or someone else's yard and the homeowner would be responsible for repairing the lead and everything in the path, including paving the road. The longer the lead is, the more places it has to fail. In addition, a private lead running parallel in the right-of-way has an increased risk of being damaged from other construction activities, such as franchise utility installation, since the private leads are not part of the Miss Dig process.

The three houses on Harding that do not abut another road have noncompliant water and sanitary sewer leads. Everyone else has standard leads on Wallingford or Morton. (And thus, will not be replaced as part of this project?)

With access to a new sewer in front of the house, the lead would be shorter and less expensive to maintain or repair. Depending on where the lead is currently, which is still unknown, the houses on Harding may not be required to immediately connect to the main, but when the current lead fails, they will be required to connect to the Harding main. Some of the current leads are nearly 100 years old, so there will now be an option when the lead fails.

4. Will making our leads compliant require access to our homes and/or digging?

The City will install the sewer main and a lead that will be capped within the right-of-way as part of the project. No digging on private property will be performed as part of this project nor is any required of the homeowners at this time. The project will connect all water leads and *possibly* sanitary leads found in Harding to the new corresponding mains.

The only access to homes needed is for dye testing to help locate the non-compliant sanitary leads. The three affected homes were sent a letter explaining this process. Ideally, the City's Public Works Department would perform the dye testing in December 2024; someone from Public Works will be contacting homeowners to schedule this. The location of the new lead for these three homes will be discussed with them when the existing location is known.

There will be some sanitary work on Morton, however, it will be confined to the public right-of-way and will not require access to homes. More details will be shared directly with the affected homeowners.