



October 16, 2013

TO: Richard C. Rossi
City Manager

FROM: Owen O'Riordan
Acting Public Works Commissioner

TOPIC: Awaiting Report 013-42 of regarding Public Works devoting a greater number of resources towards the challenge of improving the cleanliness of Central Square.

The Department of Public Works has devoted substantial resources aimed at reducing litter, graffiti, and odors, and improving sidewalk conditions and plantings in Central Square. We expect to continue and increase these efforts where possible. However, we also recognize the important role local businesses play in Central Square, and we have been working with the Central Square Business Association to promote collaborative efforts between the City and the business community to keep Central Square clean.

Public Works is responsible for the following cleaning activities in Central Square:

Coordinating cleaning by mechanical street and sidewalk sweepers, and hand crews, which is done seven days a week, weather permitting.

- The streets in and around Central Square are mechanically swept daily between 4:00 am- 8:00 am, between April and December.
- A vacuum sidewalk sweeper is deployed daily between April and December
- Hand-crews for sidewalk sweeping are stationed in Central Square year-round, between 7:00 am- 3:00 pm Monday through Friday.
- On weekends (Saturdays & Sundays) streets are also mechanically swept between 4:00 am - 8:00 am and sidewalks are swept between 6:00 am-10:00 am by hand-crews and/or the vacuum sweeper.

Providing for the emptying and maintenance of rubbish receptacles.

- The 42 Big Belly solar trash compactors in Central Square are emptied seven days a week, twice a day (once between 7:00 am -3:00 pm and again between 3:00 pm -11:00 pm).
- Compactors are washed on a monthly basis during the months of April through November, and repairs are made as needed.

Addressing vandalism and graffiti.

- Electrical boxes and traffic poles are scraped of stickers as needed. Bus shelters are cleaned, and abandoned bikes are removed from racks.
- Graffiti on public property is removed as needed.
- Graffiti removal on private property is coordinated through the Public Works Department where in-house crews will power wash private property once an owner signs a waiver form.
- Graffiti prevention and enforcement efforts include issuing citations for illegal postings, when violators can be found.

Addressing unpleasant odors.

- DPW contractors steam clean the following locations once a month between April and November: Modica alley between Mass Ave and Bishop Allen Drive (between Manhattan Clothing Store and Central Kitchen), and the Central Square Library area between Green and Franklin streets.
- Twice per month steam cleaning takes place from Carl Barron Plaza at Prospect Street to Pearl Street, along Massachusetts Avenue and Magazine Street to Green. Cleaning includes Bus stops along those routes.
- Three times per year all of Central Square is steam cleaned from Bigelow Street to Sydney Street on both sides. Cleaning includes all benches, trash and recycling receptacles, cleaning and deodorizing of sidewalks, bus shelters, and removal of graffiti on public property along this route.
- Prevention and enforcement of odor concerns also involves speaking with property owners about improperly stored garbage, and issuing citations as needed.

Working to beautify the Square:

- Provides spring cleanup and mulching of planting beds in Central Square Parking Lots 4, 5 & 6.
- Maintain plantings in Carl Barron Plaza and Jill Brown Rhone Park.
- Maintain irrigation systems and the trees throughout the Square.
- Hanging flower baskets – Currently there are 90 hanging baskets for Spring/Summer displays in Central Square.
- Hang community banners and signs in the Square.
- Sand and stain or replace benches as needed.

Keep sidewalks in safe condition:

- Conduct regular inspection and repair
- Western Ave work is continuing through the winter, street and sidewalk reconstruction has begun between Memorial Drive and Montague Street. When the project is completed in 2015 Western Ave will have a separated bicycle lane (raised cycle track). Pedestrian safety will be improved with raised crosswalks on (unsignalized) side streets, curb extensions, and new crosswalks. New trees, planting beds, trash / recycling containers and energy efficient streetlights will be installed. Pedestrian crossings will be improved at Pleasant / Western / Franklin and at Blackstone. Cronin Park will be enlarged, landscaped, and include a rain garden.
- Spring of 2014 DPW will be continuing with repair work associated with the sewer separation work on Mass Ave. Areas that had conflicts with underground vaults, grading issues, or are in the poorest conditions will be addressed.
- As part of the Mass Ave sidewalk work, several tree grates along Mass Ave will be removed and replaced with a product called *Flexi-pave*. This product was used recently on Pearl Street in front of the Library and has helped deter litter from building up in these areas.
- Summer of 2014 sidewalk work on both Douglas and Temple streets will begin.

Working with business owners specific to our various responsibilities and enforcement of ordinances:

- Over the Last several years, The Department of Public Works the Community Development Department, and The Police Department have been meeting with the Environment Sub-Committee of the Central Square Business Association, in order to develop collaborative strategies between the City and business community to keep Central Square Clean. The group meets twice a month and works through day to day issues within Central Square involving cleanliness, lawlessness and quality of life issues.
- Through this group, have partnered with the Central Square community on a Spring Clean Up Day over the last several years, which involve City employees, business owners, and community members in an event to help clean the Square while promoting a sense of pride and stewardship among participants.
- Developed and distributed the *Keeping Cambridge Clean Brochure* which emphasizes businesses responsibility to keep sidewalks clean. The brochure was developed in partnership with the Central Square Business Association, the Harvard Square Business Association, the Cambridge Combined Business Association, and the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce.
- Monitor excessive litter and cigarette butts on sidewalks and enforce as needed.

Development of Information and resources for the community:

- Have developed hotline numbers for the following information
 - Graffiti-(617) (617) 349-6955
 - Sidewalk defects (617) 349-4854

- Snow and ice hotline (617) 349-4903
- Rodent Reporting (617) 349-4899
- Instituted IReport for mobile reporting the following with a smart phone:
 - Bike Rack Issues
 - Park Maintenance Issues
 - Sidewalk Defects
 - Tree Maintenance Issues
 - Traffic Sign Complaints
 - Traffic Signal Complaints

The City will continue to monitor conditions in Central Square and work with business so that resources are maximized for maintaining cleanliness and infrastructure within the Square.