Green Infrastructure and Property Values

According to research trends, the following actions have been found to improve surrounding property values:

▪ Replacing asphalt with green space
▪ Infrastructure and utility improvements
▪ Traffic calming measures on residential streets

(References: Traffic Calming Benefits, Costs and Equity Impacts, Victoria Transport Policy Institute; Traffic Calming – A Livability Fact Sheet, AARP)

1. What is green infrastructure?
Green infrastructure is a term used for a wide variety of practices that establish or mimic natural processes to manage stormwater. For more information visit: www.albanyny.gov/GreenInfrastructure.

2. What is the Green Infrastructure plan for Ramsey Place?
The right-of-way between the curb and sidewalk will be extended and include grass with trees. Underneath the right-of-way, an underground water detention space and new separated stormwater pipe will be added. In addition, the street will include two feet of porous pavement next to each curb. This porous pavement will allow water to drain to the underground detention space, the tree roots, and stormwater pipe. The project also includes repaving of the street.

3. How will the project impact trees on Ramsey Place?
The project will increase the number and variety of trees on Ramsey Place. The Water Department worked closely with the City of Albany Forester and landscape architects regarding specific trees to be planted or removed in accordance with the City of Albany’s Forestry Program to promote a healthy urban forest. A total of 20 trees were removed, all of which were determined to be in decline or have a life expectancy of only 5 more years or less. In optimal planting conditions in the fall, 43 new trees will be planted on Ramsey Place. They will have about a 2.5-inch trunk diameter and will stand approximately 12 feet tall. More information about the tree species to be planted can be found at: www.albanyny.gov/GreenInfrastructure

4. What are the stormwater management benefits?
The project is expected to provide approximately 150,000 gallons of separated storm sewer storage. The new separated storm sewer and storage will slow down rainwater before it eventually meets with the combined sewers on Hackett and New Scotland. Separating the storm sewer will allow Ramsey Place to disconnect completely from the combined sewer system in the future, and in the meantime, decreases the likelihood of basement back-ups from the combined sewer.

5. The original proposal included bioswales; why are they no longer being used in this project?
While bioswales provide excellent stormwater quality benefits, an alternative option was chosen for this specific project due to feedback received from residents. The increased amount of green space and trees will still provide similar stormwater benefits as the original proposal, while the new design will also require less maintenance.
6. **Is the street width changing?**
The existing curb on Ramsey Place will be moved towards the street center approximately three feet on each side. This changes the street from 40 feet wide to 34 feet wide, which is a slight adjustment from the originally proposed 33 feet. This creates two 10 foot driving lanes and two seven foot parking lanes. The street will remain the widest in the Helderberg neighborhood by about seven feet. With the narrowed street, the right-of-ways between the curb and the sidewalk on each side of the street will be extended by 3 feet.

a. **Why is the street being narrowed?**
- The wide pavement helps contribute to unfavorable stormwater runoff. Creating more green space between the curb and the sidewalk allows for green infrastructure to be implemented and reduces impervious pavement.
- The proposed 34-foot width has been advised by City of Albany Traffic Engineering as a traffic calming measure after conducting a 2018 traffic study.
- It is cost-prohibitive to maintain a street that is wider than necessary; this includes asphalt for repaving and repairing, plowing, and salting the street.

b. **Why 34 feet?**
- The 34-foot width has been determined to be the appropriate street width by both the Water Department and Traffic Engineering. This width provides an acceptable four-lane street while optimizing space for tree growth and stormwater storage.

7. **Is replacing the median an option?**
In order for a median to be re-established and help with stormwater runoff, the entire street would need to be reshaped from curb to curb to put the low point in the center of the street. It was determined that this was not a financially feasible option in addition to not being widely desired by the neighborhood or city officials.

8. **Is it an option for the sidewalk to be moved to extend front yards and narrow the right-of-way between the curb and the sidewalk?**
One of the benefits of expanding the right-of-way space is to give trees adequate room to grow. The larger the right-of-way green space, the better chance trees have to develop root systems that do not impact sidewalks or utilities. Moving the sidewalks as part of this project would create significantly more work that does not benefit and may actually harm the green infrastructure.

9. **How is the project funded?**
The project is funded primarily by the Albany Water Department. The lead water service replacement portion of the project is funded by a grant from the New York State Department of Health. The City of Albany Department of General Services is also contributing funding to go towards the street repaving and sidewalk and curb repair.

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**Lead Service Replacement**
As part of this planned construction, the Water Department will be replacing existing lead water services with copper water services among households who have agreed to do so. This is the pipe that takes water from the water main on the street to the meter in the home. Lead is no longer a desirable or acceptable material to use for water pipes, but it is likely used for water services in homes built before 1940. The City of Albany performs lead testing and is compliant with U.S. EPA water treatment regulations for lead services; however, it is beneficial to replace lead services when there is an opportunity to do so. Learn more at [www.albanyny.gov/lead](http://www.albanyny.gov/lead)

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