



# Frequently Asked Questions

## 2020 South End Stormwater Project

*Information related to specific locations and impacts to discreet addresses should be sent to Jenna Olson, Water Policy & Programs Manager at [jolson@burlingtonvt.gov](mailto:jolson@burlingtonvt.gov).*

**There is a staked sign in front of my house – does that mean there is going to be a system built there?**

No, not necessarily. There is a separate project currently happening in the same general area of the City, focused on gathering soil, utility, and groundwater information so we know where stormwater projects are even feasible. The stake only means that our contractor, Stone Environmental, is going to be conducting a soil boring there to gather this data. This effort will ultimately be occurring City-wide, but began in the South end as it has notoriously challenging soil conditions – as well as our most problematic combined sewer issues (i.e. Pine Street CSO.)

You can confirm the locations of the systems that ARE planned for construction on the project webpage.

**Do you have a more detailed map or plan showing the areas where on-street parking will be eliminated?**

Yes. A map showing the parking plan has been posted to our project web page.

**Who is responsible for maintaining these systems? If they are not being maintained, what recourse do residents have?**

The City is responsible for maintenance, and we are in the process of securing a contract with Paragon landscaping services to conduct this work. In the future, Burlington Parks, Recreation and Waterfront may take that maintenance work over – but we will ensure maintenance services are in place. These systems are planted with perennials, so while the City will replace any plants that might not survive over the winter, these do not need to be replanted each year.

Leaf cleanup is also important. Some leaves are bound to remain over the winter, as timing always varies for full leaf-off. However, these systems will all need to be cleared to some degree throughout the winter to allow water to enter during warm periods – so getting as many leaves out in the fall as possible is important. Further, there will be initial spring cleanup to remove any remaining detritus that might get left behind from the previous fall.

If maintenance is lacking at any time, residents may contact DPW Water Resources using the SeeClickFix platform. Maintaining these systems is vital to both their basic function, as well as garnering ongoing community support for future similar projects. These systems will ultimately be part of Burlington's formal plan to meet water quality regulations (i.e. permit requirements) for the lake. This will mean we have to submit reports to the State each year – and maintenance is a key part of what the state will want to know about.

**Will residents be able to make requests or recommendations for plant species selected for the systems?**

The project plans do include preliminary planting plans for these systems. However, we are open to requests from residents on plant selection. Please keep in mind that plants must meet certain criteria to ensure they will survive in a stormwater system. The Vermont Rain Garden Manual includes an extensive list of plants that are well-suited to these conditions. The only additional parameter we ask that you consider is overall height. We will not be able to plant anything in these systems that grows tall enough to impair sightlines for motorists and pedestrians.

**Has the Burlington Fire Department reviewed the plans for this, and are there safety concerns?**

Burlington Fire Department has reviewed and approved the proposed project layout. DPW is in regular contact with BFD about all of our projects to ensure they can continue to safely navigate our streets.

**Are these gardens going to turn into mosquito breeding grounds?**

These systems have been designed and located in this area specifically because of the well-drained soils. Mosquitoes require several days of standing water to develop from the egg stage to larvae and then into adults (see the CDC's guidance here: <https://www.cdc.gov/zika/pdfs/MosquitoLifecycle.pdf>) These systems will not hold water for more than 24 hours at a time – even if there is a significant amount of rain, there are underdrains in the systems to ensure drainage can occur. We have not had issues with standing water in any of our other systems thus far.

**Are there sidewalks planned as part of this work?**

No, this does not include any sidewalk construction.

**Should I be concerned about my basement flooding as a result of these systems? Are the streets going to flood if there is too much rain for them to handle?**

No. All but one of the proposed systems are connected to the City's sewer system underneath. They will capture and slow the stormwater down – but will ultimately still discharge through the sewer to our Main Wastewater Treatment Plant. The one system that is not connected to the sewer is in a location with very deep sand, which will allow water to infiltrate down to the existing groundwater table.

The systems are further equipped with 'overflow' drains. These drains will catch water once it reaches a certain height, preventing it from backing up onto the roadway.

**Will any of my front lawn be taken up by this system?**

No. The systems will be constructed within the footprint of the existing roadway.

**Will construction require blasting? Should I be concerned about my foundation being damaged by vibrations?**

There will absolutely not be any blasting as part of this work. Asphalt will be removed by saw cutting and an excavator, as we want to protect the existing pavement as much as possible and provide clean transitions between the garden areas and pavement. This area was specifically selected for these systems due to its excellent drainage properties, and therefore the excavation should not be difficult. This also means that the contractor will not require tools that produce any significant vibrations – which would be more of a concern in areas of the City with foundations that are very old (late 1800's / early 1900's) and made of stone.

**Are the City's plows and street sweepers going to be able to navigate around these systems?**

The DPW crews have been plowing and sweeping around systems like this for about 5 years at this point. We coordinate closely with our Technical Services Division and our Streets Maintenance Division to ensure these

systems are adequately marked and designed with passing widths to accommodate plow blades, sweepers, and emergency vehicles. Streets has not had any issues getting around the systems thus far.

**I am concerned that this is going to negatively impact my property value – will the City give us a property tax cut for having one of these systems in front of our home? Or can you move it away from my yard?**

Aside from the overall water quality benefits, these systems are designed to be aesthetically pleasing landscape features – and will be maintained accordingly. These systems do not come with a property tax cut. We make as much effort as we can to minimize impacts to adjacent property owners.

This neighborhood contains a rather discreet drainage area feeding the Pine Street CSO, and happens to also have significant variation in subsurface conditions. The selected locations were chosen specifically because there have excellent soil conditions to promote drainage, and no utility conflicts.