

# Neighbourhood Guide

For Cambridge Residents In  
New Neighbourhoods

## Frequently Asked Questions About:

Development Process  
Stormwater Management Ponds  
Lot Grading and Drainage  
Parking  
Building Permits  
Environmental Concerns  
Waste Disposal  
Street Trees and Landscaping  
Important Contact Information



# Introduction

This brochure has been prepared for new homeowners to provide answers to the most frequently asked questions of City departments.

## Responsibilities

### **Who Is Responsible For The Road And Sewer Construction?**

Until final assumption by the City of Cambridge, the developer is responsible for a variety of elements within your subdivision such as the construction of:

- sewers and water mains;
- roads, curbs, sidewalks, driveways;
- street lighting, street trees, walkways; and
- fencing of walkways and open space areas in the subdivision, if required.

### **What Does “Final Assumption Of A New Subdivision” Mean?**

- Final assumption means that the City assumes the responsibility for the maintenance of all municipal services.
- Final assumption usually occurs 3 to 4 years after the registration of the subdivision or when the City is satisfied that the developer’s obligations have been fulfilled.

The developer is responsible for all municipal services and the upkeep of streets until the City assumes the subdivision. The City provides snow removal for the developer.

### **Will There Be A Hydro Box, Communication Box, Community Mailbox Or Lamp Post In Front Of My House?**

Information about the placement of utilities and sidewalks in front of your property can be obtained from either the developer of the subdivision or the builder.

### **Who Is Responsible For The Sidewalks And Driveways?**

- The developer and/or builder are responsible for the construction of all concrete sidewalks and concrete or



asphalt driveways between the curb and your property line.

- The builder should be contacted for the timing of driveway paving.
- The developer should be contacted for information on sidewalk locations.
- Your driveway may or may not be paved as part of the purchase price of your home. Check your agreement of purchase and sale.

### Why Did The Builder Ask For A Grading Deposit?

- Most builders require a deposit prior to the closing of the sale of a home to ensure the homeowner does not change the grading of the lot or damage the sidewalk, driveway or curbs.
- The City does not require the builder to take these deposits as the City retains the developer's securities until it assumes the responsibility for the subdivision.
- Check your Agreement of Purchase and Sale to find out when the builder returns the deposits and for any easements, warning clauses or special restrictions that may apply to your lot.

### Who Do I Contact For Problems Or Deficiencies In My New Home?

- Your builder is responsible for any deficiencies in your new home. Contact your builder **in writing** to inform them of the deficiencies.



- Give your builder a chance to act on your complaints. If the builder fails to react, forward your complaints **in writing** to the Tarion Home Warranty Corporation for assistance. Visit their website at [www.tarion.com](http://www.tarion.com) or call 1-877-9TARION.
- Lot grading and drainage issues outside your home are not covered under the Tarion Home Warranty Corporation.



## What Are Stormwater Management (SWM) Ponds?

- SWM ponds are designed areas to temporarily hold water resulting from heavy rainstorms.
- SWM ponds help prevent sediment from entering into natural outlets such as local streams and wetlands.
- SWM ponds help to prevent flooding in neighbourhoods downstream and reduce the erosion of stream banks. The water levels in the pond(s) will change depending on how much and how fast the rain comes.
- SWM ponds contain natural vegetation such as cattails, grasses, trees and shrubs to naturally cleanse the water held back in the SWM pond.
- Fencing of the SWM ponds will depend on the City's design criteria. In most circumstances, the need for fencing is avoided by providing gentle slopes and planting natural vegetation on the slopes of the SWM pond.

Unless a proper community trail/ passage has been constructed within the pond area, it is not recommended that the pond be used for any kind of passive or active use.

## What Is An Infiltration Gallery?

- Stones surrounded by filter cloth located underground in the front or back yard of your property.
- The function of an infiltration gallery is to reduce surface runoff and recharge the groundwater.
- The infiltration gallery allows rainwater from your downspouts to trickle into the ground slowly so that it can be absorbed by the soil.

## How Can I Tell If I Have Infiltration Galleries?

Contact your builder to determine if infiltration galleries were installed during the construction of your home.



# Environmental Concerns

## What Are Buffers?

- Buffers are areas of land beside natural areas that contain important environmental features. They are designed to protect the natural area from development and human activity and are planted with natural vegetation.

## Why Are Buffers Important?

Buffers are important because they:

- help woodlands, wetlands and creek vegetation to grow naturally;
- slow down and filter surface runoff before it enters the natural areas; and
- provide habitat for birds and other wildlife.

Buffers should be respected as important environmental protection. Please do not cultivate, landscape, mulch, mow, trim or spray pesticides of any kind on these lands.

## What Is Encroachment?

- Encroachment occurs when a private property owner extends their activities or yard onto City-owned or privately owned property such as buffer areas, stormwater management ponds or parkland. Encroachments are not permitted on any City land.

## Who Plants Street Trees?

- Tree planting is approved by the City prior to the development of the subdivision.
- Tree planting is the responsibility of the developer.
- The approved tree type will not be altered or waived at the time of planting.
- Trees are planted on the boulevard of the street and are not to be moved.
- Please water newly planted street trees until they are established; however be sure to first check for any Region of Waterloo water restrictions.
- Planted trees are placed on a two-year maintenance guarantee and the City assumes responsibility of these trees after final assumption of the subdivision.



## When Will My Lot Have Sod?

- Sodding or seeding, if it is part of your purchase price is the responsibility of your builder.

- Contact your builder for the timing of completion.
- It is to your advantage that sodding be delayed for a period of time to allow for any settlement to occur on your lot.

### What Is The Best Way To Care For My New Sod?

- During the first two weeks, heavy traffic including lawn mowing should be avoided.

Watering your new lawn is very important to ensure that the sod will not wilt, however it is important to comply with the Region of Waterloo water restrictions for lawn watering.

For specific information about lawn watering, please contact the Region of Waterloo at 519-575-4400 or by email at [watercycle@regionofwaterloo.ca](mailto:watercycle@regionofwaterloo.ca) or visit the website at [www.regionofwaterloo.ca](http://www.regionofwaterloo.ca).

### How Do I Maintain My Lawn?

In Ontario, the use of pesticides to kill weeds and insects in lawns is banned. Pesticides actually create a lawn that is weak and unable to fend off weeds and insects. Contact your local landscaping company to find out about pesticide free lawn maintenance.

By following a few easy steps, a healthy lawn is possible.

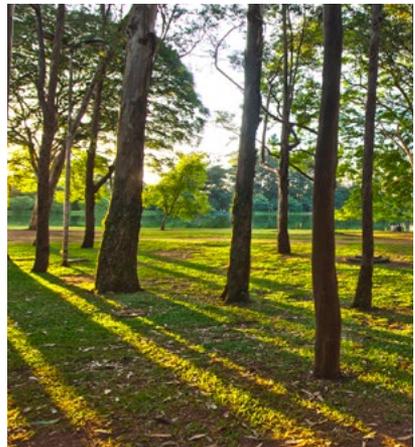
- **In the Spring**, aerate, fertilize and overseed your lawn.
- **In the Summer**, cut your lawn to 3" and no shorter, leave grass clippings, and hand pull weeds.

- **In the Fall**, dethatch, aerate, overseed and fertilize your lawn.

### What About Natural Alternatives To Grass?

Native plants are easier to grow, require less water and have already developed a natural resistance to local extreme climates and certain plant diseases.

- Native plants and flowers can be obtained by visiting your local nurseries. Please do not remove plants from natural areas.
- In high traffic areas, try replacing grass with mulch to create a walk.
- To help you out in the kitchen, plant a vegetable, fruit or herb garden.
- For information on "naturescaping" your property, visit the Region of Waterloo's website at [www.regionofwaterloo.ca](http://www.regionofwaterloo.ca).



### What About The Trees On My Property?

During the subdivision approval process, City staff tries to keep as many existing trees in the area as possible.

Please remember that any existing trees on your property should be protected. Trees provide shade, habitat for wildlife, clean the air for everyone and increase the value of your property.

### Should I Feed Wildlife?

- Avoid feeding wildlife such as rabbits and squirrels, as these animals must maintain a diet of natural foods. Keep in mind, that feed often attracts other less desirable wildlife such as raccoons and skunks.
- Be sure to leash your dogs and bell your cats to avoid disturbing and harming wildlife.
- Be aware that many birds, especially in winter, become reliant on the food at feeders

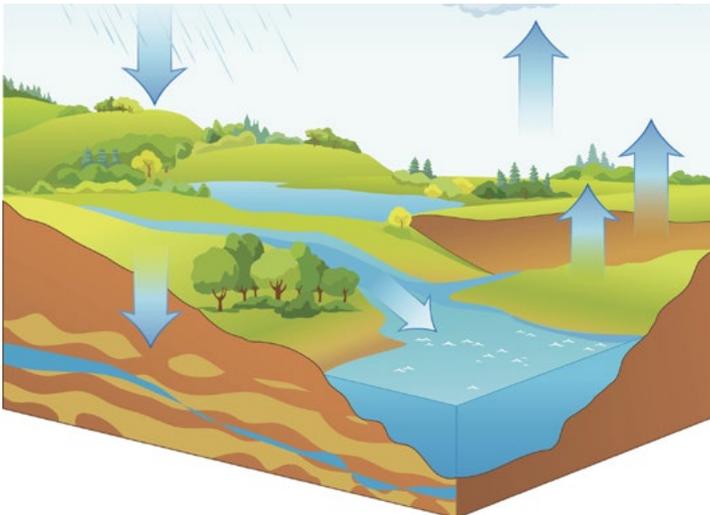
as a primary source of food.

- Do not feed waterfowl such as swans and ducks. These birds rely on water plants for food. If these birds feed on human food such as bread, they feel full and can actually starve to death.

### What Is Groundwater And Why Is Groundwater Important?

Groundwater is water stored naturally in the ground beneath the homes, streets, parks and schools in your neighbourhood.

- Residents of Cambridge rely on groundwater from municipal wells for drinking water.
- It is important to ensure that groundwater is kept free of chemicals such as pesticides, oil and gasoline.
- When chemicals are improperly disposed of, they can leak down into the groundwater.



## How Do I Dispose Of Hazardous Materials?

- The Region of Waterloo accepts household hazardous waste at the Cambridge Waste Transfer Station at 201 Savage Drive throughout the year.
- Contact the Region at 519-575-4400 or [www.regionofwaterloo.ca](http://www.regionofwaterloo.ca) for more information.



If a spill of hazardous waste or chemicals occurs on your property or in your community, contact the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change at 1-800-268-6060 and the Region of Waterloo Emergency Spill Line at 519-575-4400.

## Where Can I Obtain A Recycling Bin?

New homeowners in Cambridge: Pick up **one** free blue box by bringing an unaltered copy of your deed or purchase agreement (dated within the last 12 months) to the Cambridge (201 Savage Drive) Waste Management Administration Building from Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

## Where Can I Obtain A Rainbarrel?

The Region of Waterloo sells rainbarrels at a reduced cost at certain times of the year. Contact the Region of Waterloo at 519-575-4400 or visit their website at [www.regionofwaterloo.ca](http://www.regionofwaterloo.ca) for information.



# Building Permits

## What Is A Building Permit?

A building permit is a licence that gives legal permission to undertake the construction, alteration, repair or change of use of a building or structure.

## Why Do I Need A Building Permit?

- The building permit process helps you to understand the Building Code requirements as well as other local requirements that may apply to your project.
- Building permits allow the building official to review the design and to inspect the construction to ensure it meets the requirements of the Building Code and local by-laws.
- Building permits allow the building official to ensure minimum safety standards are met, which helps to reduce the risks to health and safety of the public and building occupants.

## When Do I Need A Building Permit?

Before you begin construction please contact the Building Division at 519-740-4613 to find out if a permit is required for your project.

Building permits are required for the following:

- the construction of any new buildings or prefabricated buildings.
- repair, renovation and alteration (addition), change to existing buildings.
- finishing a basement or adding a basement entrance.
- building systems (heating, wood stoves).
- decks, retaining walls, swimming pools.
- change of use of a building (e.g. creating an apartment in your house).



# Parking

## Can I Widen My Driveway?

- All driveway widths and approaches are constructed according to the City's Zoning By-law and Transportation and Public Works standards.
  - Before widening your driveway, please contact the Planning Division at 519-621-0740. to make sure that what you want to do is allowed in the City's Zoning By-law.
  - Please be advised that any curb cutting must be undertaken by Engineering Services Division. Please contact the Engineering Services Division at 519-621-0740.
- on or overhanging any curb, boulevard, sidewalk or multi-use trail.
  - facing the wrong way.
  - more than 15 cm from the curb.
  - within 3 metres of a fire hydrant.
  - within 15 metres of a railway crossing.
  - within 9 metres of an intersection, including across the top of a T intersection.
  - within 15 metres of an intersection controlled by traffic control signals or a roundabout.
  - within 1.0 metre of a driveway.
  - within 15 metres on either side of a bus stop.
  - within a bike lane.
  - during a Snow Event.

## Can I Park On The Street?

The following are by-law rules that apply on your street, with or without parking by-law signs:

No person shall park a motor vehicle on a City street:

- for longer than 3 consecutive hours.
- between the hours of 2:30 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. from January 1st to March 15th on all streets, in a Downtown Core Area or on a Regional Road on any day of the year.

Please be advised that there are other parking restrictions not listed in this brochure.

For specific inquiries or exemptions for on-street parking during the day, please contact Transportation/ Parking at 519-621-0740 ext. 4217 or after hours at 519-621-0740 ext. 4272 or email a Parking Exemption Request to [parkingexemption@cambridge.ca](mailto:parkingexemption@cambridge.ca) with your street name as the subject before 1:30 am.

# Important Contact Information

## **Emergency**

**911**

Cambridge Memorial Hospital	519-621-2330
Police (non-emergency)	519-653-7700
Fire (non-emergency)	519-621-6001
Region of Waterloo Emergency Spill Line	519-575-4400
Ontario Emergency Spill Line	1-800-268-6060

## **City of Cambridge**

**[www.cambridge.ca](http://www.cambridge.ca)**

Cambridge City Hall	519-623-1340
Mayor's Office	519-740-4517
Clerks' Division	519-740-4680
Community Services	519-740-4681
Building Division	519-621-0740
Planning Division	519-621-0740
By-law Enforcement	519-621-0740
Public Works	519-621-0740
Parking/Transportation	519-621-0740
Parking after hours	519-621-0740

## **Region of Waterloo**

**[www.regionofwaterloo.ca](http://www.regionofwaterloo.ca)**

Region of Waterloo General Line	519-575-4400
Water Restrictions	519-575-4400
Recycling, garbage, composters, rainbarrels	519-575-4400
Grand River Transit	519-575-4400

## **Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA)**

**[www.grandriver.ca](http://www.grandriver.ca)**

519-621-2761

Corporation of the City of Cambridge  
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P.O. Box 669  
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