

## BEACON STREET MEETING 3-19-18, Minutes

### Project staff in attendance:

- City of Somerville
  - Ward 2 Alderman J.T. Scott
  - Brad Rawson, Director of Transportation & Infrastructure
  - Stan Koty, DPW Commissioner
  - Jackie Rossetti, Deputy Director of Communications
- MassDOT
  - Paul Maloy
  - Rich DeSantis
- Newport Construction
  - Tony Barrile
  - Brian DeFelice
- Design Consultants, Inc.
  - Dennis Murtagh
- Eversource
  - John Burke
  - Bill Zamparelli

### Project Information & Update

- Project Contractor: Newport Construction
- Project Designer: Design Consultants, Inc.
- Estimated total project cost: \$11.1 million
- Estimated completion: Fall of 2018, with possibly minor “Punch List” items in Spring 2019

The scope of the entire project is from Oxford St. to the Cambridge line (Dickinson St.). The overall project consists of roadway and sidewalk reconstruction, construction of a new cycle track, drain lines, maintenance or replacement of other utilities, street lighting, traffic signal installations, new curbing, concrete paver crosswalks, street trees, signage, pavement markings, and other streetscape items.

As of March 2018 the project is approximately 50% complete, including the following:

- From Oxford St. to Washington St., underground work was completed and the road was repaved to a temporary binder coat.
- From Oxford to Washington, sidewalks and the protected bike lane are mostly completed.
- Drainage work is mostly complete project-wide.
- New traffic signals and utility relocations are ongoing.

Work to be completed in 2018 includes:

- Roadway and sidewalk reconstruction (Washington St. to the Cambridge line)
- Final paving and final pavement markings (fall 2018)
- Utility relocation and traffic signal installation will be ongoing through the spring and summer of 2018.
- Landscaping and streetscape items will be finished in fall 2018.
- Excavation/major reconstruction will begin during the week of April 17.
  - Newport will excavate in 1,000 ft. sections

- The plan, barring any unforeseen challenges, is to keep the road open to two-way traffic by using alternating traffic with the help of a police detail. At this time, no major detours are planned, however some side streets (for example but there will be parking restrictions in the work zones/surrounding areas to keep traffic moving.
- When work zones impact businesses, Newport will only work at/block one entrance/driveway at a time so that deliveries can still be made.
- There is a possibility that more work will be needed by Eversource gas, though it is not anticipated.

### **Notes from Newport Construction**

*[in regards to questions about timeline of sidewalk excavation and repair/completion]*

When sidewalks are excavated, there's a lot of underground work that also has to happen before they can be repoured with the final concrete layer. This includes installing conduit, laying gravel, and other necessary underground repairs and additions. Sometimes there are issues where existing driveways and structures are not at proper elevation so additional work is necessary, and there is additional coordination needed with residents/businesses and the project design team that can delay the process.

There are approximately 12 different sections between Oxford and Washington where Newport needs to go back and complete concrete sections that are still in temporary patch pavement. This will be done at the same time as the rest of the work between Washington and the Cambridge line.

### **Bike facilities**

Between Oxford and Washington on the eastbound side, there is a protected bike lane. The bike lane is inside the curb line and parking lane, and elevated.

On the westbound side, there is a mountable bike track. This is not protected by a curb but there is a several inch berm placed on top of the pavement.

### **Tentative upcoming schedule (as of March 19, 2018)**

- Newport construction intends to remobilize on Monday, April 9.
- During the week of April 17, Newport intends to start the full depth roadway reconstruction from Washington St. to Buckingham St. (approximately 1,000 feet). This work is expected to take 2 weeks to complete. This does NOT include the Washington St. intersection. The intersection will be reconstructed later in the summer of 2018, when traffic is anticipated to be the lightest.
- On May 7, Newport intends to start the full depth roadway reconstruction from Buckingham St. to Dickinson St. (approximately 1,000 ft.). This work is anticipated to take 2 weeks to complete.
- Utility relocation, traffic signal construction and sidewalk reconstruction will be ongoing at the same time, project-wide.

### **Issues potentially impacting construction in 2018**

- Utility Work

- Eversource Electric, Verizon, and Comcast still have utility lines and poles that must be relocated. We are working to coordinate this work with all companies as quickly as possible, but it is up to each company to conduct their necessary work before the project can be completed.
- Poor subsurface soil conditions
  - Pockets of unacceptable soil (clay) were found at numerous locations under the existing Beacon St. roadway. It was necessary to remove these soils and replace them with acceptable material (gravel) prior to paving. This caused delays to the roadway reconstruction as it became necessary to perform soil testing and excavation/replacement on the fly. This issue should have less impact this year as the process for testing and acceptance is now in place.

### **Q&A Session**

**Q: How wide will the westbound mounted bike lane be?**

**A:** *The mounted bike lane is 6 feet wide.*

**Q: On what side of the street is this mounted bike lane?**

**A:** *The mounted bike lane is on the opposite side of the street from the protected bike lane. It is adjacent to the Star Market.*

**Q: Why does the mounted bike lane only have berm? Isn't this problematic? Will cars ruin it?**

**A:** *This bike lane was designed to protect the cyclists. The protected facility on the eastbound side of the street is raised, with a curb, so that cars can park adjacent to it.*

**Q: How wide is the current painted bike lane?**

**A:** *In the existing/previous condition, the painted bike lane is 4 feet wide.*

**Q: It's currently difficult for cars to pass each other. Will a wider bike lane make it even more difficult? Is there enough space?**

**A:** *In the design process that happened a number of years ago, this information would have been laid out and examined. The City's standard for a bike lane is 5 feet. For travel lanes, in an urban condition with no buses or trucks, you can get down to a minimum of 10 feet. In its final condition this portion of Beacon St. will have a travel lane of 11 feet on one side, 12 feet on the other. **(EDIT: upon additional review following the meeting, the travel lanes will be 11 feet on both sides.)***

**Q: Where do cyclists go during construction this year?**

**A:** *We will use the same detour for bicyclists that is currently in place.*

**Q: Detours for cars are not optional. Why are the detours for bicycles a "suggestion?"**

**A:** *We issued a published, final recommendation for bicycle detours. Bicyclists are permitted to utilize full travel lanes at their own risk during construction, but we push the detour route as much as possible through avenues like the Bicycle Advisory Committee and social media.*

**Q: What is the most expected level of police details during the most disruptive portion of construction?**

**A:** *There will be police details on either side of the alternating traffic route, as well as others along the route as necessary.*

**Q: Will there be pedestrian walkways when sidewalks are under construction?**

**A: [Newport]:** *There should be tall cones, with arms, to denote temporary walkways. When there is full sidewalk excavation, it may be done in conjunction with roadway excavation which means there is not a safe path on that side of the street for pedestrians. At the end of every work day, the sidewalk should be passable. If it isn't, there's an issue with Newport staff.*

**Q: Why is equipment left on site, blocking sidewalks, overnight?**

**A:** *When there is an issue like this that hasn't been addressed, the best thing to do is report it to 311 so we can track it and there is a paper trail.*

**Q: Can there be one main point of contact?**

**Q: Why haven't the electrical wires been put behind or underground?**

**A:** *At this point in the process, it isn't feasible. Sometimes in earlier design phases for some projects this is discussed, but we are too far into the process and it is too expensive to consider.*

**Q: How could a project begin without knowing there were issues with underground utilities, like the Eversource gas line?**

**A:** *We rely on the utility companies for valid and accurate reporting of their infrastructure. Before projects begin we ask these relevant questions, and we accept that what they've reported is true.*

**Q: What did Eversource do with the old gas main?**

**A:** *The old main is still under Beacon St. Eversource moved all of their services to a new main but did not remove the old.*

**Q: Is the new gas main higher pressure than the old one?**

**A:** *No.*

**Q: Are the old utility poles being removed?**

**A:** *The old poles will remain in place until all electric utilities have been moved to new poles. There are several different companies with services along Beacon St., so they all need to be coordinated and moved before any old poles will be removed.*

**Q: Can you provide the locations of the remaining poles to be replaced?**

**A:** *Eversource to provide a list.*

**Q: What does the City have for a budget in case bike facilities are damaged?**

**A:** *We continue to have new and different facilities installed across the City, such as flex posts and protected bike lanes. We review and adjust as necessary to ensure we have the proper equipment and staff training for maintenance. Currently we have 2 new pieces of equipment on order. One will plow the berm without destroying it. The other is a combo brush sweeper that will not ruin the surface. This year to clear snow from the protected bike lane we used a trackless and a John Deere rather effectively. We also continue to work with the Bicycle Advisory Committee on new procedures and protocols. We've budgeted for this, but as careful as you may be, things can happen. We address them as we learn.*

**Q: Which side do you plow snow to, the street side or the house side?**

**A:** *It's still a learning process. In the future, we plan to push snow away from the houses and toward the street.*

**Q: Will there be bump outs at intersections (i.e. Forest St.)?**

**A:** *Yes, there are a number of bump outs in the final plan. Most are not installed yet but will be this year.*

**Q:** **Is there a process in place in Somerville where you look back at projects, review, and upgrade policies to prevent similar issues from happening on future projects?**

**A:** *We are constantly trying to apply lessons learned on every project. We document everything, and conduct post-construction monitoring and analysis.*

**Q:** **Can we see the actual plan that contractors are working from with regard to tree removals?**

**A:** *The plans have not changed from 2015. These are the most recent and the final plans. Within the current plan the estimate you see calls for 30 trees to be removed, but this estimate only includes those with a diameter of over 9 inches but less than 24". All other trees are estimated under "unclassified excavation," but are still called out in the plan. The overall number of trees scheduled for removal has not changed from that 2015 plan.*

**Additional Information:** *In 2017 the City hired its first staff Arborist. The Arborist reviews all locations for new tree plantings and makes sure that we are planting the right tree for each location and condition. With the current plan for plantings on Beacon St., our Arborist determined that many trees were inappropriate for their proposed locations. We've asked MassDOT and Newport to reconsider their planting plan and have conducted a peer review and changed the species to be planted in those locations in order to ensure maximum growth potential and health for the trees.*

**Q:** **When the trees were removed, there were no police details. Why?**

**A:** *This was an error in communication. No trees were removed that were not specified in the contract.*

**Q:** **There is one tree that was marked for preservation, but it was removed. Why?**

**A:** *We believe this tree was on private property and was removed by a private contractor, not as part of this project.*

**Q:** **How large are the trees that are going to be planted at the end of the project?**

**A:** *[ANSWER?] By a review of peer review journals, planting a 3" tree will get you the same results as planting a 5" tree, or .5 inches of growth each year.*

**Q:** **Who is in charge of safety? Equipment is left on site, traffic signal timing is off, among other issues.**

**A:** *It is the responsibility of Newport, and "we will make every effort to make it better for you."*