



Needham – Newton Corridor Project Virtual Public Information Meeting Wednesday, February 3, 2021

Project Team Attendees

Chris Kivior, MassDOT
Chuck Labbee III, MassDOT
Chuck Sabella, MassDOT
Donny Dailey, MassDOT
Eric Feeley, MassDOT
Kate Barrett, RVA
Kristen Pennucci, MassDOT
Kyle Olsen, RVA
Marie Sullivan, Stantec
Michael Smith, P. Gioioso & Sons

Meeting Purpose

The purpose of this meeting was to update the public on continuing work for the Needham-Newton Corridor Project, and introduce upcoming work in Newton.

Meeting Format

The meeting was hosted via Zoom. It began with a presentation at 6:30 PM followed by time for public comments and questions.

Materials (Available on project website)

- PowerPoint presentation

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Donny Dailey, MassDOT, welcomed attendees to the Needham-Newton Corridor Virtual Public Information Meeting. The focus of this meeting was to introduce work planned for Newton, scheduled to begin in late February.

Mr. Dailey introduced the project team, comprised of staff from MassDOT, Stantec, the design consultant, P. Gioioso & Sons (PGS), the project contractor, and Regina Villa Associates (RVA),

the public outreach consultant. Chris Kivior, MassDOT, outlined the public meeting procedures, noting that the meeting will be recorded and posted online.

Mr. Dailey outlined the meeting agenda, goals, and benefits. The Needham-Newton Corridor Project utilizes a multimodal design approach, which balances the needs of all users. Designated shared use paths and crosswalks will improve pedestrian and bicycle accommodations, while a widened road and signal replacements will improve traffic operations.

Mike Smith, PGS, outlined how the contractor will deliver the project. The typical work shift is Monday through Friday, from 7:00 AM to 3:30 PM each day. There are minimal impacts during peak traffic hours (6:00 AM to 9:00 AM and 3:00 PM to 7:00 PM) and two lanes of traffic are maintained whenever possible. Mr. Smith noted that there may be short durations where private driveways will be impacted by construction, but when necessary, these impacts will be coordinated with abutters and access will be maintained at all times. Additionally, night work for milling and paving operations will be necessary to minimize traffic impacts. Abutters will be notified two weeks in advance of any night work.

Construction began in winter 2020/2021. Installation of retaining walls and drainage in the Town of Needham has been underway. Crews are scheduled to commence construction in the City of Newton in late February 2021. Mr. Smith noted that work is weather dependent and subject to change.

The remainder of the winter 2021 schedule includes installation of drainage, water mains, and underground traffic signal infrastructure in Needham on Highland Avenue from Webster Street to Hunting Road/Gould Street, at Highland Avenue from Wexford Street to the bridge over the Charles River, and in Newton on Needham Street from Oak Street/Christina Street to Tower Road.

The spring 2021 schedule includes completing retaining wall installation in Needham on Highland Avenue from Webster Street to Hunting Road/Gould Road, and roadway full depth reconstruction and base paving in Needham on Highland Avenue from Wexford Street to the bridge over the Charles River. In Newton, retaining wall installation will commence near the corner of Needham Street and Oak Street, and installation of drainage, water mains, and underground traffic signal infrastructure on Needham Street from Tower Road to Winchester Street.

The summer 2021 schedule includes pavement milling and asphalt placement in Needham on Highland Avenue from Webster Street to Hunting Road/Gould Street, as well as the commencement of curb and sidewalk reconstruction, installation of temporary pavement markings, and installation of traffic signal foundations in Needham on Highland Avenue from Wexford Street to the bridge over the Charles River. In Newton, installation of drainage, water mains, and underground traffic signal infrastructure will continue on Needham Street from Tower Road to Winchester Street. At the bridge over the Charles River, crews will commence

bridge construction by installing electric duct bank manholes, the temporary bridge support system, and shielding.

Mr. Smith explained that MassDOT is currently working with the City of Newton to incorporate the replacement of deteriorated water mains, which are nearing the end of their useful life. The City of Newton has determined that completing this work in tandem with the Needham-Newton Corridor Project would be the best course of action. If this work is approved, the contractor will host a public meeting 30 days prior to work commencing, and abutters would be notified of any service disruptions.

Before moving to the question-and-answer portion, Mr. Dailey introduced the project email address (NeedhamNewtonCorridor@dot.state.ma.us), and encouraged all attendees to visit the project website (www.mass.gov/needham-newton-corridor-project), where they can sign up for project advisories.

PUBLIC COMMENTS & QUESTIONS

Mr. Kivior outlined the instructions for participating in the public comment portion of the meeting. Participants wishing to verbally ask a question must click the “raise hand” button to indicate they would like to speak. Additionally, participants could type their question in the Q&A box.

Garry Miller expressed concern over work on the bridge over the Charles River, noting the bridge causes a traffic bottleneck under normal conditions. He asked what impacts the project team anticipates work will have on traffic flow. Mr. Smith explained all bridge work is currently in the planning stage, however, the project team intends to maintain traffic flow by maintaining two lanes of travel whenever possible.

Janice Epstein explained that during the October 30 Public Information Meeting, she and two other Needham Town Meeting members requested a meeting to discuss safety concerns on taking left turns out of Highland Terrace. Mr. Dailey requested Ms. Epstein send her contact information to Ms. Barrett. Mr. Dailey will work with MassDOT and the contractor to set a meeting time. Chuck Labbee, MassDOT, explained that the Department has heard their concerns and is looking into the issue.

Zhonghong Peng asked how long service would be impacted during water main replacements at Needham Street and Winchester Street. Mr. Smith explained that water main replacement work is currently not included in the project contract, so he could not give a clear answer on dates. However, water service interruptions would be for transferring services to the new mains, and would not take a considerable amount of time.

Jordan Appel, 49 Highland Avenue, explained that during the October 30 Public Information Meeting he asked who would remove snow once roadway widening work is complete. Mr. Labbee explained that he has reached out to MassDOT Maintenance about this concern, but has not received a definitive answer. However, it is expected snow removal on the new bike lanes

will not be the owner's responsibility, while sidewalk snow removal will still be required of residents and commercial properties. Mr. Appel asked if MassDOT is implying the property owner should be responsible. Mr. Labbee explained that the Department's focus is identifying solutions to address the problem once the project is complete, and asked what the status quo for snow removal is currently. Mr. Appel explained that property owners remove snow from sidewalks as a courtesy. Chuck Sabella, MassDOT, reiterated that the Department is working to provide an answer before the end of the project. Mr. Labbee added that he does not believe it will be the owner's responsibility, but this is still being investigated.

Karen Schueler, Property Manager of Avalon at Newton Highlands, requested a point of contact to ensure she receives proper notification of impacts to convey to residents. Ms. Barrett explained that the project team strives to provide at least two-weeks' notice of any major project milestone or work via the project email list. Ms. Schueler asked for specific traffic flow impacts that will affect residents. Mr. Labbee explained that she would be contacted directly by the contractor if traffic access changes to property owners are necessary. Mr. Smith added that if Ms. Schueler is the primary contact for this residence, the best course of action is to provide her contact information to Ms. Barrett to be added to the project database.

Pam Yunker, owner of the 98-100 Winchester Street 7-11, asked if the contractor had an idea of when work will impact this location. Mr. Smith explained that he anticipates drainage utility work will begin near Ms. Yunker's location in late winter or early spring. He explained that this work will require general traffic impacts, but stressed that two lanes of travel will be maintained.

Ms. Barrett received a question asking if those who received meeting notifications are on the project email list. Ms. Barrett explained that was correct.

Seeing that there were no more questions, Mr. Dailey thanked all attendees for their participation, and explained that the project team is committed to engaging with the public throughout the project. Before closing the meeting, Mr. Dailey reminded the audience of the project email address (NeedhamNewtonCorridor@dot.state.ma.us) and encouraged attendees to check the project website. Ms. Barrett added that the project team will do their best to respond in a timely manner.