

CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
DEPARTMENT of ENGINEERING  
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE  
MAYOR



*Director, Capital Projects & Planning*  
ROBERT T. KING

*Director of Engineering*  
RICHARD E. RAICHE

**BOARD ORDER #205009 - EVERSOURCE COMMUNICATIONS  
ENGINEER'S REPORT**

On 25 January 2018, the Board of Aldermen approved the following agenda item:

**SUMMARY**

Order  
#205009

By Ald. White Jr.  
That the City Engineer not issue any street opening permits for gas work by Eversource, excluding emergency work, until an adequate description of the work to be performed is prepared by Eversource in coordination with the Director of Engineering, prior to the issuance of any such permits.

**COMPLETE TEXT**

That the City Engineer not issue any street opening permits for gas work by Eversource, excluding emergency work, until an adequate description of the work to be performed is prepared by Eversource in coordination with the Director of Engineering, prior to the issuance of any such permits.

SPONSORED BY: Alderman At Large White Jr.

**RESULT**

**RESULT: APPROVED**  
**FOLLOWUP:** Public Utilities and Public Works Committee





## Pre-Construction Season Planning

Eversource's utility reconstruction work requires Street Occupancy/Opening permits issued by the Engineering Department. Public notification related to any such permitted activity is the responsibility of the permittee. However, the Engineering Department and the Communications and Community Engagement Department typically offer assistance to permittees to better align such communications with the expectations of our constituents. During the 2017 construction season, several deficiencies with Eversource's construction practices were highlighted by constituents and escalated to the Board's attention, culminating in a meeting of the Public Utilities Public Works Committee in January 2018. Since the time of that meeting, both Engineering and Communications have been working with Eversource Gas to prepare an improved communications plan for the 2018 construction season.

Eversource has developed a plan with several modes of communication:

| Item                       | Timing                  | Distribution Detail                                |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| High-level notification    | 3 to 4 weeks in advance | Mail and/or door hang                              |
| Detailed notification      | 7 to 10 days in advance | Mail, email and/or door hang                       |
| Alert                      | 1 to 2 days in advance  | Text/call for customers providing that information |
| Conversation / FAQ handout | On arrival              | Door-to-door knocking                              |

Example copies of the high-level notification, detailed notification and FAQs are attached. These communications are significantly improved over past versions, and appear to address the concerns raised by constituents on Hudson Street, Powder House Boulevard, and elsewhere during the 2017 construction season.

Eversource has also provided their preliminary construction plans for 2018, identifying their priorities for gas main replacement. The Engineering Department is working with them to coordinate and reprioritize that work to better align with our own capital improvement plans.

As the volume of construction in Somerville will be increasing significantly this year, the Engineering Department will be hosting weekly right-of-way construction coordination meetings for all city projects, permitted construction, GLX and MassDOT activities. In addition to coordinating construction logistics across the various projects, this will provide a forum to review and correct contractor practices on a regular basis. Eversource's weekly attendance is mandatory, and the expectation has been set that permits can be revoked for failing to actively participate in the construction coordination process.





## Recommendation

Eversource has demonstrated that they are taking Somerville's concerns seriously, and have developed a plan to improve performance for the 2018 construction season. Moreover, the additional procedures established by the Engineering Department to coordinate construction provide a more visible avenue for mid-project course correction. If members of the Board have any direct feedback on the draft Eversource communications, please provide that to the Engineering Department and we will have Eversource incorporate it into their boilerplate templates. As has been our practice in the past, prior to initiation of a particular gas main reconstruction project, Engineering will share the project-specific communications with the Ward Alderman prior to distribution. During the course of construction, we would also encourage that any feedback be provided to the Engineering Department so that can be discussed at the right-of-way construction coordination meeting.

At this point in time, it is the estimation of the Engineering Department that Eversource has satisfied the requirements of this Board Order, and the issuance of permits under the scrutiny of the new procedures is satisfactory.

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February 27, 2018

**(DRAFT (first notification) – FOR REVIEW CONSIDERATIONS)**

Dear Sanborn Court, Union Square and Washington Street Neighbors,

Delivering safe, reliable energy to you is an Eversource top priority. In keeping with that commitment, Eversource is improving the natural gas distribution system in your neighborhood, beginning approximately March 12, 2018, and continuing through the week of May 21, 2018. We've been working closely with City of Somerville officials and will continue to do so through all phases of work. Since this project will include excavation activities, traffic impacts and temporary interruptions to your natural gas service, we want you to be informed of our efforts.

### How This Project Benefits You

We're always working to serve you better and these upgrades in your neighborhood will make the gas delivery system and its connection to your property safer and stronger.

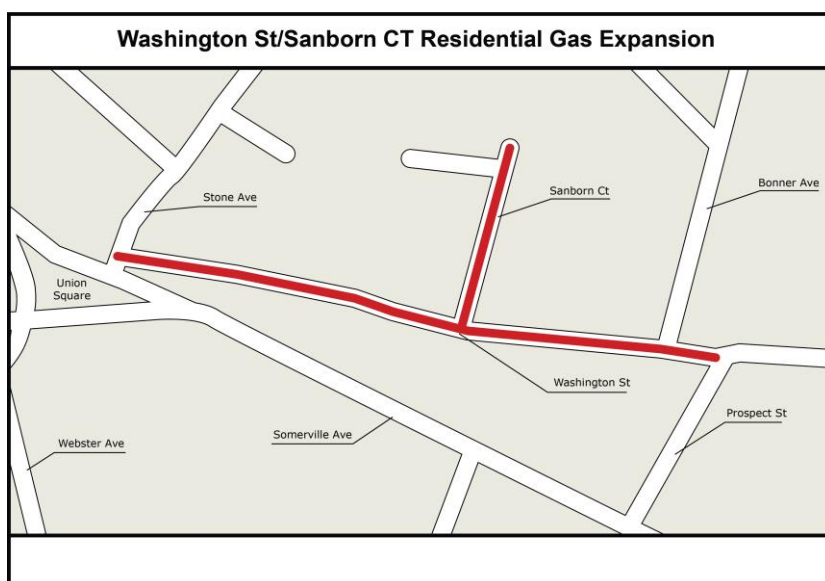
As part of this project we will be replacing underground gas piping with new, plastic pipe. Plastic pipe is more durable and is designed to withstand harsh underground conditions. That's why we're replacing the gas service line on your property with the same material. Your service line carries natural gas from the pipeline in the street to your home.

We will also be installing new outside gas metering equipment that is compatible with the upgraded system. This means we'll be removing the meter that's in your basement. Many customers find that this change makes things easier, because Eversource can complete required inspections that keep you safe and ensure that your bill is accurate, without entering your property. An outside meter also provides Eversource first responders with quicker access in the unlikely event of an emergency.

### What You Can Expect While We're in Your Neighborhood

Working together is important to the successful and timely completion of this project. Feeney Brothers Utility Services, will be performing the work on behalf of Eversource in your neighborhood. Here are some important things you should know about how we will work with you:

- All Eversource employees, contractors and field representatives carry identification that you can ask to see at any time.
- You can expect to see construction activities Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Our work is weather dependent, so construction activities are subject to change.



- Eversource will maintain access to residences and business, as well as ensure priority passage of emergency vehicle traffic through construction areas.
- Police detail will be on-site to oversee traffic control for vehicles and pedestrians.
- Access to Sanborn Court will remain open to local traffic, however, specific areas along the work zone will have No Parking signs posted.
- We will contact you before any construction activities begin on your property, so you'll know when to expect us.
- We may need to make a temporary interruption in your natural gas service, but will give you advanced notice, by a letter, phone call or door hanger, so you and your family can plan accordingly.
- Construction on or near your property may include:
  - installing gas turn on/off valves in a box at the street curb;
  - replacing your existing gas service line with more durable, plastic piping;
  - installing a service "riser" on your property. This riser is a reinforced pipe that protects the gas service line as it transitions from below ground to above ground;
  - replacing the inside meter with new outside metering equipment; and
  - tying in new outside piping to your property's inside piping and relighting all gas appliances.

### **Our Commitment to You**

We are committed to being good neighbors and performing our work with utmost respect for you and your property. As construction professionals, we also know that living within a work zone can be challenging and we will do our best to minimize any disruption you may experience.

### **Need to Contact Us?**

If you have any questions or need any additional information regarding this important upgrade work, please contact myself or John Burke. We thank you for your patience and cooperation as we work together to complete this gas system improvement project.

Sincerely,

*Aharon Sarafian*

Eversource, Gas Construction Supervisor  
339-987-0736  
aharon.sarafianeversource.com

*John Burke*

Eversource, Gas Construction Supervisor  
617-629-3264  
john.v.burke@eversource.com

March 14, 2018

**(DRAFT (door-to-door) – FOR REVIEW CONSIDERATIONS)**

Dear Sanborn Court, Union Square and Washington Street Neighbors,

As part of our everyday effort to deliver reliable energy to our customers and communities, we are preparing to upgrade the natural gas system in your neighborhood. This project is one of several in Somerville, Massachusetts that will improve our natural gas distribution system.

### **We're Always Working to Serve You Better**

We expect to begin construction activities on Monday, March 12, 2018, and will continue through the week of May 21, 2018. We've been working closely with the Somerville officials and will continue to do so through all phases of work. Since this project will include excavation activities, traffic impacts and temporary interruptions to your natural gas service, we want you to be informed of our efforts.

### **What You Can Expect**

Feeney Brothers Utility Services will be performing the work on behalf of Eversource in your neighborhood. Here are some important things you should know about how we will work with you:

- **Proper Identification:** All Eversource employees, contractors and field representatives carry identification that you can ask to see at any time.
- **Construction Hours:** Construction activities will take place Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Due to weather or unexpected circumstances our construction activities are subject to change.
- **Affected Roadways:** Our work will take place along the following streets in Somerville:
  - Sanborn Court
  - Union Square
  - Washington Street
- **Road Access:** Access to Sanborn Court will remain open to local traffic, however, specific areas along the work zone will have No Parking signs posted.
- **Access to Residences & Businesses:** Eversource will maintain access to residences and business (including driveways), as well as ensure priority passage of emergency vehicle traffic through construction areas. At certain times, there may be a delay for access, but we will move equipment or use steel plates to allow safe passage.
- **Traffic Management:** We will coordinate with your community on effective traffic management for pedestrians and vehicles.
- **Pre-Notification:** We will contact you before any construction activities begin on your property, so you'll know when to expect us.
- **Reliable Service:** We may need to make a temporary interruption in your natural gas service, but will give you advanced notice, by a letter, phone call or door hanger, so you and your family can plan accordingly.

- **What We Will Be Doing:** Construction on or near your property may include:

- installing gas turn on/off valves in a box at the street curb;
- replacing your existing gas service line with more durable, plastic piping;
- installing a service “riser” on your property. This riser is a reinforced pipe that protects the gas service line as it transitions from below ground to above ground;
- replacing the inside meter with new outside metering equipment; and
- tying in new outside piping to your property’s inside piping and relighting all gas appliances.



Gas Meter and Pressure  
Regulator on riser

### Need to Contact Us?

We are committed to being good neighbors and performing our work with utmost respect for you and your property. If you have any questions or need any additional information regarding this important upgrade work, please contact myself or John Burke. We thank you for your patience and cooperation as we work together to complete this gas system improvement project.

Sincerely,

*Aharon Sarafian*

Eversource, Gas Construction Supervisor  
339-987-0736  
aharon.sarafianeversource.com

*John Burke*

Eversource, Gas Construction Supervisor  
617-629-3264  
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## Upgrading the Natural Gas Delivery System in Your Neighborhood

### Frequently Asked Questions

*Eversource is committed to delivering safe, reliable energy to you and the communities we serve. We are always working to serve you better and are modernizing the natural gas distribution system in your neighborhood. As part of the project, we're strengthening the connection to your property and relocating each gas meter outside to enhance safety, reliability and convenience.*

*Living in a construction area can be challenging and Eversource is committed to being a good neighbor in order to minimize any disruption. We've developed these questions and answers, so you know what to expect as we complete this important project. We thank you in advance for your patience and understanding.*

#### **What can I expect?**

During construction, you can expect the following in your neighborhood:

- All Eversource employees and contractors working on the project carry ID badges. We encourage you to ask them for identification before you provide them — or anyone — access to your home.
- Underground utility lines are marked using a color coding system with colored flags and/or paint. Yellow = natural gas; red = electric; blue = water; orange = communications; and green = sewer and drain lines
- We will be digging trenches and/or holes in streets, sidewalks and parkways so new plastic or steel pipe can be installed
- Moving gas meters, regulators and shut-off valves from inside homes and businesses to outside
- Installing a service "riser." The riser is a reinforced pipe that protects the gas service line as it transitions from below ground to above ground
- Installing service pipes from the new gas main in the street to homes and businesses
- Testing to ensure the new pipe system is operating correctly
- Transferring service from old pipe to new pipe

During work on side streets, there may be "No Parking" signs posted during assigned work hours. Every night, trenches and holes will be covered or

filled and most construction equipment will be moved off site. As the project progresses, temporary repairs to streets, sidewalks and parkways will be made until full service is transferred to the new pipeline and permanent restorations are complete.

#### **What hours will Eversource be working?**

Construction activities typically occurs Monday through Friday, between 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Our work is weather dependent, so in certain instances an occasional Saturday (pending municipal approval) may be needed to keep the project on schedule.



#### **Will you need to come inside my home or business?**

Yes. To upgrade our delivery system and ensure the reliable natural gas service you've come to depend on, our crews need to perform work both outside and inside your home or business.

- If your gas meter is indoors, we'll need to relocate it outdoors. To work with you to choose a safe, appropriate outdoor location, we'll schedule a 15- to 20-minute appointment to look at your existing meter and discuss options.
- The transfer of service to the new pipe means every customer will experience a temporary disruption in service. We'll schedule an appointment to come inside and re-light all of your natural gas equipment once this work is complete.

### ***Will I know when you are coming to my property?***

Yes, we want you to be able to plan ahead, so you will receive a letter, phone call or door hanger, before any work or gas interruptions take place on your property.



### ***Will I need to be home during my scheduled appointment?***

Someone 18 years or older must be present to grant us access inside your home or business. The sooner we get in, the sooner your service will be restored and work crews will be out of your neighborhood.

### ***Why is Eversource moving the gas meter outside?***

The new outside gas metering equipment is compatible with the upgraded main and service lines installed. An outside meter gives Eversource first responders quicker access in the unlikely event of a gas emergency. Outside meters also enhance safety and convenience, this way Eversource can complete required inspections that keep you safe and ensure bill accuracy without entering your property.

### ***Will I be able to suggest to your crews where I'd like the meter located outside?***

Safety is the most important factor in choosing the best location, and we'll work with you to select an appropriate spot that protects you and your family while keeping your gas service working properly.

### ***If the meter is outside, does it require any special maintenance?***

Outside gas meters are designed to withstand winter weather conditions. It is important to note that excessive snow accumulation and ice buildup could affect the performance of your heating system. Outdoor vent openings and air intakes should remain clear to avoid an appliance malfunction or interruption to your gas service. In the winter, snow and ice should be gently removed using a broom, brush or by hand; never use a shovel, sharp object or kick the gas meter to dislodge the ice and snow.

### ***My gas meter is located indoors. Is there anything I should do before your crews arrive?***

We'll need full access to the meter, so remove any cabinets, dry wall or anything that could impede or block access to the meter. To keep our employees safe please secure any pets. We also ask that you inform our employees and contractors about any unsafe conditions or hazards, such as a broken stairway or a loose railing, prior to their entry into the premise.

### ***How long will my service be off while you're switching service to the new pipe?***

Our priority is to keep disruptions to a minimum and, in most cases, service is restored within four hours. You'll have advance notice of the disruption in service because we'll schedule an appointment to re-light your appliances. If we expect the move would require more time, we'll factor that into your appointment so you'll know in advance. Also, if we find an unsafe condition with an appliance or with customer-owned gas piping, gas service to the appliance or to the building may not be restored until the repairs have been made.

### ***Will my landscaping be restored?***

Yes. Eversource provides restoration at no expense to you. Restoration includes bringing the area back to its pre-work condition by loaming and seeding the impacted areas.

### ***How quickly is restoration completed?***

In large part that's up to you and your neighbors since it depends on how quickly we can get every customer along your street scheduled for service. The actual restoration work generally only takes a few days, but work can't begin until all services on the block have been transferred.

### ***What should I do if my sewer is clogged or backed up after you are done?***

While every effort is made to avoid other underground facilities, there are instances in

which a natural gas line can intersect with a sewer line. If, after our mains or services have been installed, you find that your sewer line is clogged or backed up, please call Eversource at 800-592-2000 before anyone attempts to clear it. We will send a service technician to determine whether any potential conflict exists between the company's natural gas pipes and your sewer line.

### ***How can I verify that a person seeking access to my home or business is an employee or contractor working for Eversource?***

All Eversource employees, contractors and field representatives carry identification that you can ask to see at any time.

## **Important Safety Information – Know the Smell of Natural Gas**

We're always working to serve you better and these upgrades in your neighborhood will make the gas delivery system and its connection to your property safer and stronger. At Eversource, safety is our priority and this project is no exception. Because natural gas is non-toxic, colorless, tasteless and odorless, we add a distinctive, pungent odor similar to rotten eggs, so you can recognize it easily and know if natural gas is escaping.

### **If you smell natural gas inside your home:**

**LEAVE** the building immediately and call 9-1-1 or Eversource at 800-592-2000.

**DO NOT** smoke, operate any electrical switches or appliances, (including both cell phones and land lines) where you sense the leak. These items may produce a spark that could ignite the gas and cause an explosion.

**DO NOT** assume someone else will report the condition.

**PROVIDE** the exact location, including cross streets.

**LET US KNOW** if digging activities are going on in the area.

### **A gas leak or damaged pipeline is indicated by the following:**

- A strong odor
- A blowing or hissing sound from underground natural gas facilities or pipes
- Dirt blowing into the air or water bubbling
- Grass, plants or bushes turning brown over natural gas facilities
- Fire coming out of the ground

If you observe any of these conditions, immediately call Eversource Gas Emergency at 800-592-2000 or 9-1-1 from another location.