

Residents' requests for the conclusion of the Beacon Street reconstruction project

September 13, 2019

To: Mayor Joseph Curtatone
Brad Rawson (Director, Mobility), Jesse Moos (Construction Liason)

CC: Katjana Ballantyne (President) Stephane Hirsch (At Large),
Pat Jehlen (State Senator), Wilfred MBah (At Large),
Denise Provost (State Rep), Mary Jo Rosetti (At Large),
JT Scott (Ward 2), William White (At Large)

It seems likely that the MassDOT / Newport project on Beacon Street will be completed in 2019. This is a tremendous relief for Beacon St. residents, who have endured construction noise, disruption and most trying of all, continued delays during the five years of this project. In light of this momentous occasion, we the undersigned residents of Beacon and abutting streets are writing to make six requests of the City of Somerville:

1) **Hold MassDOT and Newport accountable to 100% completion of the project.**

After the years of challenge, stress and delays on this project, there will be a natural urge to close the books and move on. We ask that you be vigilant on the "punch list" and quality control here at the end of the project. For instance, there are sidewalk locations where brickwork is missing or where we see asphalt sidewalk sections rather than concrete. We have bump outs filled with construction debris, incomplete plantings, benches scattered rather than securely bolted in place, and many other examples. There are also numerous locations where personal property has been damaged or left in a hazardous condition. All of these must be put right before the project can be considered complete.

2) **Promptly correct any defects that are uncovered once the project is complete.**

All of us are aware of the challenges in coordination and transparency that the city has experienced working with Newport Construction and Eversource. As we settle in with our new drainage system, new gas and water mains, and new roadway, we all expect some issues. As an early example, there is currently substantial flooding after heavy rains on Beacon St at Properzi Way. We ask that you put Beacon Street at the front of the queue for any needed repairs for at least a year, rather than enforcing any sort of moratorium. We also ask that you advocate strongly for repairs to utility systems not directly under the city's control.

3) **Vigorously enforce traffic laws both for drivers and bicyclists.**

Strong enforcement is essential both on Beacon and also on intersecting streets for the next several months (e.g. excessive speeding by motorists and bicyclists ignoring red lights, both of which endanger pedestrians). The constant construction and change has allowed bad habits to flourish in some of our road users. We need your support to restore law and order.

4) **Hold Newport financially accountable for the way that our street trees were removed in late 2017.**

In January of this year, our Tree Warden issued a citation in the amount of \$38,000 to Newport Construction. Newport's response in March, that they have no intention of paying, is a slap in the face to our community and to the authority of the Mayor's office. It is important that Newport be held accountable for this extreme and glaring example of the way they have treated our community.

5) **Ensure that the patterns of traffic signals are correct and consistent.**

The traffic signals at Park and at Washington Street have been in flux since they were installed earlier this year. The series of changes has led to confusion and concern among pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. We ask your staff to settle on a design, ensure that the signals are correctly configured, and also communicate the design through signage, fliers, and email messages. We strongly urge that the same signal pattern be applied to both intersections. Most local residents prefer an exclusive signal phase for pedestrians with the added safety feature of "No Turn on Red" signs to prevent injury to pedestrians crossing

6) **Convene a series of community meetings over the next year.**

The residents and business owners of Beacon Street have been living in a construction zone for five years. Some have grown accustomed to raising their voices merely to be heard. The goal of these meetings would be to resume a community dialogue to understand potential future changes to the streetscape.

We make these requests in a sincere and open spirit, and we look forward to a better functioning streetscape on Beacon Street and to a better community engagement process for Beacon St and other streets in the City.

Beacon St:

Barbara Carlson	Kenneth Carlson	Alison Geyer	Fred Geyer
Dan Hare	Diana Ho	Lisa N Harrington	Qiuling He
Daphne Kalotay	Elaine Koury	M. Moskowitz	Cathy Piantigini
Adam Portney	Allyson Portney	Christopher Weinert	Maryann M. Heuston

Eliot Street:

Nora E Basile

Ian Woloschin

Ellsworth Avenue:

Sam Spaulding

Forest Street:

Kevin McGrath

Ivaloo Street:

Chris Dwan

Leslie Macmillan

Donna Foley-Hodges Eleanor Howe

Catherine Valentine

Stefanie London

Harrison Street:

Scott Noll

Jeffrey Swanson

Morgan Street:

Neil Brenner