

South Main Street Water Main Replacement and Resurfacing Project Public Engagement Meeting #1 Discussion Summary

South Main Street Water Main Replacement and Resurfacing Project Public Engagement Meeting #1

Date: Tuesday, March 9, 2021

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Location: Zoom Virtual Meeting

Attendees: Public present: 6

Council members present: 0

City staff present: 3; Michael Nearing, Heather Seyfarth, Nick Hutchinson

Wade Trim staff present: 2; Vaughn Martin, Carmelle Tremblay

Re: South Main Street Water Main Replacement and Resurfacing Project
City of Ann Arbor File No. 2021-011

Note: The following is not a direct transcription of the meeting discussion. This summary has been prepared from notes taken during the meeting; comments are paraphrased for brevity.

Poll Questions

The following questions were asked of the audience in poll format.

1. Should we work on the project in a segmented manner (i.e. Huron to Washington)?

Results: 57% of the audience voted; 100% voted 'yes'; 0% voted 'no'. (Note: City Staff members refrained from voting in all poll questions)

Additional audience comments:

- The earlier in the construction season that the project starts would be better for business owners;
- Performing the project in segments would be helpful;
- Anything that can be done to minimize disruption to businesses will be helpful.

City response: The project team will take this feedback and sketch-up options of what segmented construction might look like. These concepts will be presented to the public at a future engagement meeting.

2. Is working on the weekends acceptable to complete the project faster?

Results: 71% of the audience voted; 80% voted 'yes'; 20% voted 'no'

Additional audience comments:

- Most restaurants and retailers along Main Street do a lot of business on weekends;
- It may be more beneficial to work longer hours on Monday or Tuesday (considered slower business days), rather than over the weekend.

Audience Questions

The following questions were asked by the audience. Staff responses are marked with an ‘A’ and denoted in italics. Where clarifications or responses have been added after the meeting, these are denoted as ‘**Post-Meeting Note**’.

1. Is working at night an option?

A. Yes, working at night is an option. It has been staff’s experience, however that members of the community have voiced objection to night work. Regardless, this is certainly a possibility that can be studied further as an option.

2. Will 4-inch water taps for future fire suppression be included in the project, whether as part of the City contract, or separately assessed to property owners who desire it?

A. The criteria, placement, and cost for Fire Department Connections (FDC) are set forth in the City of Ann Arbor Code of Ordinances. The cost of a fire department connection is borne by the property owner. The requirements for FDC’s will be researched in depth as a part of this project. As part of the public engagement effort Staff will endeavor to work with private property owners and determine if new fire suppression leads are desired to be installed where necessary and in accordance with the City Code. Fire hydrant and valve placement will also depend on the FDC requirements, as a valve must be located between a fire service lead and a hydrant.

Overall, the City’s goal is to minimize future disruption to Main Street, and an analysis of future fire suppression needs will aid in achieving that goal.

Post-meeting Note: *A question related to potential subsidies for Fire Department Connections was asked via e-mail prior to the March 9th Meeting. City Staff is researching this issue and preparing a comprehensive response as there are other factors that impact this issue. This response will build upon the above referenced answer and further refine and clarify the project’s position moving forward.*

3. How do we determine if our property has an appropriate sewer connection or if we qualify for a new public sewer tap?

A. If the building on your property is connected to the public sanitary sewer in S. Main Street, then this is deemed to be a proper sanitary sewer connection. There may be some buildings that are not properly connected to the City sanitary sewer system. The City is aware of a building(s) that are connected to a small diameter, private, sanitary sewer lead, located in the alley west of Main Street. This is an example of property(ies) that will need new sewer lead connections directly to the public sanitary system. City Staff is currently working to dye test sanitary sewers to determine which buildings are connected to the private, small-diameter, private, lead. The Design Team will share the results of the dye testing with the affected property owners as the project's design progresses.

4. Will businesses/residents lose water for significant amounts of time?

A. As we are transferring water services from the old water main to the new water main, and when we are performing tie-ins to the City water system, there will be some disruption to water service. These tie-ins can take approximately 4-6 hours and will certainly be scheduled with property/business owners/residents in advance.

We understand that water service is an important element to many businesses on S. Main Street. This is a good example of an opportunity for limited night work to minimize disruption to the local businesses and vital water services.

5. If property owners would like to make other improvements (ex. replacing private sewer service), would the project contractor be available to do that private work?

A. As a part of the design, the project team will determine a logical stopping point for the work included in the project contract. If the property owner would like further private work to be performed, we would encourage contacting the project team to discuss the possible arrangement of this work. Whether this work is performed by the selected project contractor or by another external contractor (and coordinated with the project's work), the project team can help in coordinating that work with the S. Main Street project if it is deemed appropriate.

6. Will there be an opportunity to increase the size of private water services, if deemed necessary to support a future change to the nature of business in a certain building?

A. The standard water service size within the City of Ann Arbor is 1-inch. Depending on the needs of the building, we can certainly investigate upsizing to a 2-inch copper service. Four inch or larger water services will require special consideration and additional costs to the project. The project team will be happy to discuss these upsizing requests with property owners during the design phase.

Post-meeting Note: *As stated above, it is certainly possible to upsize a building's water service as part of this project. However, if a property owner wishes to upsize their water service (over the standard 1-inch diameter pipe), they will be responsible to pay the difference in costs between the size of the proposed and existing water service. These costs are published in the City Code and available through the City's Customer Service Unit. Depending upon the size of the proposed water service, there may be additional costs involved as well.*

7. Many of the businesses on Main Street are struggling because of the pandemic. There is hope that 2022 will be the first true year to rebound, and therefore there is concern about the additional disruption this project will cause. Is there any discussion to delay this project even further?

A. The construction of this project was originally scheduled to take place in 2022. City staff has decided to push the construction back to 2023 to try to minimize further disruption after the pandemic; however, we certainly understand the severity of impacts that COVID-19 has had, especially on businesses. The project team will be happy to discuss the project schedule further as we obtain more information on what the design, maintenance of traffic, and construction strategies will look like.

8. Will the building owners, property owners or renters be assessed for the cost of this project? Ultimately, who will be paying for this work?

A. The water main replacement portion of this project will be paid for through City funds, specifically the revenues generated from water and sewer bills. The resurfacing portion of the project will be paid for through the Street Resurfacing Millage. There are no additional assessment costs for which property owners will be responsible (with the exception of potential upsizing costs of water services or installation costs of new sanitary sewer leads.)

Post Meeting Email

9. Can a drip irrigation system be put into the flowerbeds in front of our building (or at least the service lead for a future system)?

Post-Meeting Note: *Currently the raised planters all have quick-connect fittings for watering that I presumed would be reconnected as part of our work. I would suggest that those be re-used. We could discuss this further during an upcoming Walk and Talk session. However, there may be some hurdles to overcome with the re-connecting the existing piping, installing the needed backflow preventers, and winterizing the piping and water meters so that they are not damaged during the Fall and Winter months. While I am not certain, I believe that there may be some concerns from Staff in a couple of different branches of the Public Services Area that would need to be worked through with regard to installing and maintaining the backflow preventers and water meters. We can investigate this issue further to determine if my thoughts are on point. Finally, the City almost assuredly would not take on any responsibility for operating or maintaining the quick connect fittings or sprinklers. That work would need to be done by the business owners association. We, unfortunately, do not have the staff or resources to take on this type of work.*

10. Will the flowerbeds themselves be torn up or affected in your work?

Post-Meeting Note: *I don't foresee that happening at this point in time. We will try diligently to work around the raised planters as part of our work. As the design effort proceeds, we will be able to confirm this assumption with you.*