



Public Facilities Committee Report

City of Newton In City Council

Wednesday, October 23, 2024

Present: Councilors Albright (Chair), Getz, Kelley, Kalis, Gentile, and Danberg

Absent: Councilors Leary and Laredo

Also present: Councilor Bixby

City Staff: Associate City Engineer John Daghlian

All Public Facilities agendas and reports, both past and present, can be found at the following link:
<https://www.newtonma.gov/government/city-clerk/city-council/council-standing-committees/public-facilities-committee>

For more information regarding this meeting, a video recording can be found at the following link: [Public Facilities Committee - October 23, 2024](#)

#392-24 ***Appointment of Alexander Lee to the Sustainable Materials Management Commission***

HER HONOR THE MAYOR appointing Alexander Lee, 11 Chapel Street, Newton as a member of the Sustainable Materials Management Commission for a term to expire on November 4, 2027. (60 days: December 20, 2024)

Action: **Public Facilities Committee Approved 6-0**

Note: Alexander Lee joined the committee to discuss his appointment to the Sustainable Materials Management Commission. Mr. Lee explained that he has worked on environmental causes his whole life and has attended SMMC meetings in the past to understand the committee's work better. He stated his new address is 10 Rogers St, Newton.

A councilor expressed thanks to Mr. Lee for his willingness to serve.

A councilor asked Mr. Lee to foster discussion on mandatory organic composting in Newton to reduce the weight of garbage collected which will save the City money.

Councilor Kelley motioned to approve, which passed unanimously.

Public Hearing**#396-24 Request for a grant of location in Centre Street**

NATIONAL GRID petition for a grant of location to install and maintain gas main in Centre Street as follows:

- Approximately 1135 ft of 12 in. plastic main in Centre St. from the existing 12 in. coated steel in Centre Ave. to the existing 10 in. Cast Iron at #543 Centre St. to replace approximately 65 ft. of 10- in. Cast Iron (1899), approximately 85 feet of 12 in., Bare Steel (1964), approximately 935 feet of 10 in. Cast Iron (1899), approximately 15 ft. of 10 in. Bare Steel (1899), approximately 20 ft. of 12 in. Coated Steel and approximately 15 ft. of 10 in. Coated Steel
- Approximately 1125 ft. of 12 in. plastic main in Vernon St. from Centre St. to Park St. to replace approximately 50 feet of 4- inch, Cast Iron (1898), approximately 775 feet of 6- inch, Cast Iron (1930) and approximately 300 feet of 6- inch, Bare Steel (1933)
- Approximately 100 ft. of 6 in. plastic main in the intersection of Eldredge St. and Vernon St. to replace approximately 85 feet of 6- inch, Cast Iron (1930) and approximately 15 feet of 6 -inch, Bare Steel (1933)
- Approximately 40 ft. of 6 inch plastic main in the intersection of Baldwin St. and Vernon St. to replace approximately 40 feet of 6 -inch, Cast Iron (1930)
- Approximately 320 ft. of 8 in. plastic main in Mt Ida St. from Centre St. to the existing 6 in. plastic main in Newtonville Ave. to replace approximately 320 feet of 6- inch, Bare Steel (1938)
- Approximately 720 in. plastic main in Hollis St. from the existing 10 in., Cast Iron (1899) at #515 Center St. to the existing 10 in. Cast Iron (1899) at #543 Centre St. to replace approximately 405 feet of 3- inch, Wrought Iron (1933) and approximately 315 feet of 3- inch, Cast Iron (1903)
- Approximately 610 ft. of 8 in. plastic in Church St. from Centre St. to the existing 8 in. plastic (2015) at #120 Church St. to replace approximately 595 ft. of 4 in. Cast Iron (1910) and approximately 15 ft. of 6 in. plastic (1999)
- Abandonment of approximately 40 ft. of 4 in. Bare Steel (1953) in Wesley St. (South) and approximately 30 ft. of 4 in. Bare Steel (1948) in Wesley St. (North)

[Centre Street – back up material](#)

Action: Public Facilities Committee Held 6-0; Public Hearing Continued

Note: Please see #399-24 for committee discussion on this Grant of Location.

Public Hearing**#397-24 Request for a grant of location in Walnut Street**

NATIONAL GRID petition for a grant of location to install and maintain gas main in Walnut Street as follows:

- Approximately 220 ft. of 12 in. plastic in Walnut St. from #1136 Walnut St. to #1170 Walnut St. to replace approximately 220 ft. of 12 in. Cast Iron (1904)
- Approximately 695 ft. of 12 in. plastic in Walnut St. from #1162 Walnut St. (south of bridge) to #1208 Walnut St. to replace approximately 695 ft. of 10 in. Cast Iron (1898)
- Approximately 310 ft. of 8 in. plastic in Lincoln St. from Walnut St. to the existing 8 in. plastic at #34 Lincoln St. to replace approximately 310 ft. of 10 in. Cast Iron (1906)
- Approximately 1535 feet of 8 in. plastic in Floral St. from Hyde St. to #123 Floral St. to replace approximately 30 ft. of 4 in. plastic (2008/2006), approximately 10 ft. of 4 in. Bare Steel (1954), approximately 1360 ft. of 4 in. Cast Iron (1898) and approximately 10 ft. of 4 in. Bare Steel (1954)
- Approximately 210 ft. of 4 in. plastic in Floral Pl. from Floral St. to end of main at #13 Floral Pl. to replace approximately 195 ft. of 4 in. Cast Iron (1911) and approximately 15 ft. of 4 in. plastic
- Approximately 370 ft. of 6 in. plastic in Hyde St. from the existing 4 in. plastic at #120 Hyde St. to Centre St. to replace approximately 40 ft. of 4 in. plastic (1992), approximately 275 ft. of 4 in. Cast Iron (1909) and approximately 55 ft. of 4 in. Bare Steel (1956)

[Walnut Street – back up material](#)

Action: Public Facilities Committee Held 6-0

Note: Please see #399-24 for committee discussion on this Grant of Location.

Public Hearing**#398-24 Request for a grant of location in Washington Street**

NATIONAL GRID petition for a grant of location to install and maintain gas main in Washington Street as follows:

- Approximately 3210 ft. of 8 in. plastic in Washington St. from the existing 24 in. Cast Iron in Commonwealth Ave. to the railroad crossing at #1940 Washington St. to replace approximately 3105 ft. of 10 in. LP Cast Iron (1899) and approximately 15 ft. of 10 in. Coated Steel (1976)

- *Approximately 250 ft. of 2 in. plastic in Bonmar Cir. from the new 8 in. plastic in Washington St. to the end of main at #15 Bonmar Cir. to replace approximately 250 ft. of 6 in. Cast Iron (1926)*
- *Approximately 230 ft. of 2 in. plastic in Angier Cir. from the new 8 in. plastic in Washington St. to end of main at #19 Angier Cir. to replace approximately 230 ft. of 6 in. Cast Iron (1927)*
- *Abandonment of approximately 25 ft. of 10 in. Cast Iron in the intersection of Washington St. and Woodland Rd. (cut and cap the existing 6 in. Cast in Woodland Rd.)*
- *Approximately 30 ft. of 6 in. plastic stub in the intersection of Washington St. and Hope St. (cut and cap the existing 6 in. Cast Iron in Hope St.) to replace approximately 30 ft. of 6 in. Cast Iron (1928)*
- *Approximately 320 ft. of 2 in. plastic in Seton Hill Rd. from the new 8 in. plastic in Washington St. to end of main at #20 Seton Hill Rd. to replace approximately 25 ft. of 4 in. Cast Iron (1899), approximately 20 ft. of 4 in. plastic (2000) and approximately 275 ft. of 4 in. Coat Steel (1951)*
- *Approximately 30 ft. of 6 in. plastic stub in the intersection of Washington St. and Leslie Rd. (cut and cap the existing 6 in. Cast Iron in Leslie Rd.) to replace approximately 30 ft. of 6 in. Cast Iron (1927)*
- *Approximately 20 ft. of 6 in. plastic stub in the intersection of Washington St. and Day St. (cut and cap the existing 4 in. Bare Steel in Day St.) to replace approximately 20 ft. of 4 in. Bare Steel (1940)*
- *Approximately 745 ft. of 6 in. plastic in Aspen Ave. from the new 8 in. plastic Washington St. to the existing 6 in. at #115 Aspen Ave. to replace approximately 745 of 6 in. Cast Iron (1914)*
- *Installation of 85 ft. of 6 in. 22 plastic in Aspen Ave. between the gap at #112 and #115 Aspen Ave.*
- *Approximately 55 ft. of 2 in. plastic in the intersection of Forest Ave. and Aspen Ave. to replace 55 ft. of 6 in. Cast Iron (1914)*
- *Abandonment of approximately 95 ft. of 4 in. plastic (1998) in private property between Stanton Ave. to Day St. and approximately 330 ft. of 2in. plastic in Stanton Ave. from the new 8 in. plastic in Washington St. to end of main at #25 Stanton Ave. to replace 330 ft. of 4 in. plastic (1998)*

[Washington Street – back up material](#)

Action: Public Facilities Committee Held 6-0

Note: Please see #399-24 for committee discussion on this Grant of Location.

Public Hearing**#399-24 Request for a grant of location in Canterbury Road**

NATIONAL GRID petition for a grant of location to install and maintain gas main in Canterbury Road as follows:

- Approximately 660 ft. of 4 in. plastic in Boylston St. from the existing 2 in. plastic at #1121 Boylston St. to the existing 3 in. plastic at #1173 Boylston St. to replace approximately 660 ft. of 2 in. plastic (1979)
- Approximately 280 ft. of 4 in. plastic in Bacon Pl. from Boylston St. to Waldorf Rd. to replace 280 ft. of 4 in. Cast Iron (1907/1910)
- Approximately 750 ft. of 4 in. plastic in Waldorf Rd. from Canterbury Rd. to Bacon Pl. to replace approximately 90 ft. of 4 in. plastic (2008) and approximately 660 ft. of 4 in. Cast Iron (1907/1911/1915)
- Approximately 955 ft. of 4 in. plastic in Canterbury Rd. from Meredith Ave. to #73 Canterbury Rd. to replace approximately 620 ft. of 4 in. Cast Iron (1914) and 335 ft. of 6 in. Cast Iron (1926)
- Approximately 230 ft. of 4 in. plastic in Ridgeway Ter. from Canterbury Rd. to end of main at #18 Ridgeway Ter. to replace 230 ft. of 6 in. Cast Iron (1926)
- Approximately 270 ft. of 4 in. plastic in Meredith Ave. from #4 Meredith Ave. to #22 Meredith Ave. (dead end main at #22 Meredith Ave.) to replace approximately 270 ft. of 8 in. Cast Iron (1904) and abandon approximately 75 ft. of 6 in. LP plastic (1974) and approximately 125 ft. of 8 in. Cast Iron (1904) between #22 Meredith Ave. and the intersection of Harrison St. and Lincoln St.

[Canterbury Road – back up material](#)

Action: Public Facilities Committee Held 6-0

Note: Mary Mulroney and Tammy Saporito of National Grid presented the above requests to the Public Facilities Committee.

The Committee submitted the attached questions before the start of the meeting and National Grid has provided the attached responses.

A councilor asked what diameter of old pipes are usable and why National Grid is replacing pipes from 2008 as part of one of the Grants of Location. Ms. Mulroney said they would not know until they cut into the pipe, and they are replacing the plastic to maintain consistency. The same councilor asked if it was cheaper for the rate payer to repair or replace the pipes. Ms. Mulroney

and Ms. Saporito both said National Grid replaces what is needed for public safety under DPU guidelines.

A councilor asked for evidence that explains why these pipes must be replaced rather than repaired. Ms. Saporito responded that public safety is the number one reason why they are looking to replace these pipes and when their design/engineering/planning team look at areas, they prioritize based on age, location, and size of leaks.

A councilor suggested the creation of a visual explaining the existing and replacement values rather than the narrative form in the Grant of Location. The same councilor asked for further explanation why they are prioritizing the streets that they have chosen and for clarification on whether the gas pipe replacement was a requirement of federal regulation. Ms. Mulrone answered that they comply with state and OSHA regulations, but she did not know the details on federal regulation.

Chair Albright provided an update on conversations with Amy Smith, Director at National Grid, and Anne Berwick, Co-Director of Sustainability for City of Newton, about a possible electrification pilot program in Newton.

A councilor noted appreciation for National Grid's work on these leaks to make these areas safer.

The public hearing was opened.

Peter Barrer of 60 Endicott Rd. expressed support for creating a long-term city-wide plan to replace gas with electrification and said that pipe replacement is a wasteful way of reducing leaks. He explained that in 2023, residents of Newton did a study and found that National Grid spent 17 million dollars on replacing pipes and \$200,000 on fixing leaks in Newton. He added that National Grid wants to replace 15,000 feet of pipe with these four Grants of Location and multiplied by the historical cost for pipe installation for National Grid at \$575 per foot, that is 8.9 million dollars. Newton residents did another study in both 2023 and 2022 about pipe replacement and found that this process did not prevent new leaks. Mr. Barrer also listed some specific concerns with each of the Grants of Location regarding incomplete stamp drawings, a potential switch from low pressure pipes to high pressure pipes and associated costs, and a complex detour plan.

Keith Tornheim of 120 Hyde St. asked for clarification about which pipes National Grid is required to replace due to age and pointed out that none of these pipes are old enough. Chair Albright explained that the regulations require National Grid to replace Cast Iron pipes that are older than 1860 or 8 inches or less and that some of these pipes are 8 inches or less but the main reason for replacing these pipes according to National Grid is for public safety.

Susan Tornheim of 120 Hyde St. expressed support for fixing gas leaks instead of replacing pipes and that pipe replacement goes against the State's climate goals.

Alan Gordon of 27A Floral St. expressed strong support for getting the city off gas as soon as possible. He also pointed out that there are no reported leaks on Floral Street, so he does not know why the pipes on Floral Street are being replaced.

Enrique Rosero of 19 Garland St. explained that he has a background in working for utility companies and that he opposes these Grants of Location. He expressed concerns over National Grid's motivation for requesting these projects and feels residents want to fix pipes and move to electric rather than replace gas pipes.

Mark Dyen of 132 Church St. wanted to know the level of danger he was in as National Grid has identified the road he lives on in one of the Grants of Location. He asked if the portion of pipe replacement on Church St. would be an expansion of capacity and if National Grid would be fixing the leaks in the connections between the main and a house.

Marcia Cooper of 170 Evelyn Rd. explained she had property damage from a pipe replacement and supports holding these items.

Ellen Fisher of 26 Canterbury Rd. shared that the map of Newton gas leaks shows only two leaks on Canterbury Rd. She suggested this money would be better spent on electrifying homes rather than replacing pipes.

Bob Persons of 2396 Commonwealth Ave. explained that the State Legislature is considering legislation that would change the Gas Safety Enhancement Program to allow repairing and retiring as options to replacing piping and would allow DPU to require the gas company to evaluate the relative costs of repairing, replacing, and retiring before they proceed with work. He asked the Committee to postpone a decision on these Grants of Location to see what happens with the proposed legislation.

Ellie Goldberg of 79 Elmore St. explained that she has pipeline replacement projects going on currently in her area and that it has been disruptive. She wants to know how many leaks these projects have been designed to fix and how many households in Newton have had water intrusion problems. She asked for clarification on the definition of what a leak prone pipe is compared to leaky pipes. She called for the strategic retirement of this system and a plan for moving Newton to an electric system.

After consideration from the Committee, Chair Albright kept the public hearing open.

A councilor expressed support for a comprehensive strategic plan and for more information from National Grid regarding the questions that had been raised during the meeting.

A councilor also asked for the questions that were raised during the meeting to be sent over to National Grid for further explanation.

A councilor asked for the questions to be answered by National Grid as quickly as possible because they do not want to delay pipe replacements that are safety issues. The councilor asked the Chair to put together a list of questions after the meeting to send to National Grid.

Councilor Kelley motioned to hold #396-24, #397-24, #398-24, and #399-24, which all passed unanimously.

#386-24 ***Reappointment of Alan Gordon to the Sustainable Materials Management Commission***

HER HONOR THE MAYOR reappointing Alan Gordon, 27A Floral Street, Newton Highlands as a member of the Sustainable Materials Management Commission for a term to expire on October 18, 2027. (60 days: December 20, 2024)

Action: **Public Facilities Committee Approved 6-0**

Note: Alan Gordon was present at the meeting and said that he would like to come to the Public Facilities Committee at a future date about the work they are doing on the SMMC.

Chair Albright motioned to approve, which passed unanimously.

The Committee adjourned at 8:45PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan Albright, Chair

430 – 497 Centre Street, Newton 1421233

All Grants of Location for the City of Newton must answer the following in detail:

A. Are there any leaks on this road? If yes, how many?

Yes. There is 1 open grade 3 leak and 19 repaired leaks since 2011.

B. If not, why is the gas main being extended or replaced?

The gas main is being replaced to remove aging leak prone pipe infrastructure and reduce risk associated with gas main breaks. Repairing leaks does not eliminate the risk of the pipe breaking. No extension. Existing materials are bare steel and cast iron. Age range of pipe; 1899-1948.

C. Is it in response to upcoming roadwork or new development?

No. This project was created as an integrity priority project.

D. Is capacity increasing? If yes, why?

No, there is no capacity increase.

Requested by the Commissioner: When National Grid engineers develop the GOL plans these standard questions should be answered in a written format and submitted with the GOL package.

1136- 1208 Walnut Street, Newton 1456549

All Grants of Location for the City of Newton must answer the following in detail:

A. Are there any leaks on this road? If yes, how many?

Yes. There are 2 open leaks – 1 grade 3 leak and 1 grade 2 leak along with 14 repaired leaks since 2011.

B. If not, why is the gas main being extended or replaced?

The gas main is being replaced to remove aging leak prone pipe infrastructure and reduce risk associated with gas main breaks. Repairing leaks does not eliminate the risk of the pipe breaking. No extension. Existing materials are bare steel and cast iron. Age range of pipe; 1898-1954.

C. Is it in response to upcoming roadwork or new development?

No. This project was created as an integrity priority project.

D. Is capacity increasing? If yes, why?

No, there is no capacity increase.

Requested by the Commissioner: When National Grid engineers develop the GOL plans these standard questions should be answered in a written format and submitted with the GOL package.

1750 – 1940 Washington Street, Newton 1421256

All Grants of Location for the City of Newton must answer the following in detail:

A. Are there any leaks on this road? If yes, how many?

Yes. There is 1 open grade 3 SEI leak and 65 repaired leaks since 2012.

B. If not, why is the gas main being extended or replaced?

The gas main is being replaced to remove aging leak prone pipe infrastructure and reduce risk associated with gas main breaks. Repairing leaks does not eliminate the risk of the pipe breaking. No extension. Existing materials are bare steel and cast iron. Age range of pipe; 1899-1940.

C. Is it in response to upcoming roadwork or new development?

No. This project was created as an integrity priority project.

D. Is capacity increasing? If yes, why?

No, there is no capacity increase.

Requested by the Commissioner: When National Grid engineers develop the GOL plans these standard questions should be answered in a written format and submitted with the GOL package.

1 – 73 Canterbury Road, Newton 1424821

All Grants of Location for the City of Newton must answer the following in detail:

A. Are there any leaks on this road? If yes, how many?

Yes. There are 2 open grade 3 leaks and 7 repaired leaks since 2012.

B. If not, why is the gas main being extended or replaced?

The gas main is being replaced to remove aging leak prone pipe infrastructure and reduce risk associated with gas main breaks. Repairing leaks does not eliminate the risk of the pipe breaking. No extension. Existing material is cast iron. Age range of pipe; 1904-1926.

C. Is it in response to upcoming roadwork or new development?

Yes, there is upcoming paving in Boylston St, NEW

D. Is capacity increasing? If yes, why?

No, there is no capacity increase.

Requested by the Commissioner: When National Grid engineers develop the GOL plans these standard questions should be answered in a written format and submitted with the GOL package.

#396-24, 397-24, 398-24, and 399-24

Questions from 10-23-24 Public Facilities Committee Meeting – these questions relate to the Grants of Location for Centre Street (GOL-24-47), Walnut Street (GOL-24-48), Washington Street (GOL-24-29), and Canterbury Road (GOL-24-55) that were heard by the committee on October 23, 2024 as well as the GOL for Beacon Street (GOL-24-54) that will be heard by the committee on November 6, 2024.

Councilor Questions

1. Please show the Council the federal regulations that require National Grid to replace gas pipes of the type and age of Newton's targeted pipes.
2. Please create a table that has the existing and replacement pipe information in it showing the totals by type and dimension and age of pipeline being replaced.
3. Please explain why the plastic pipe must be replaced.
4. What is the scientific evidence that these projects must be replaced as opposed to repaired?
5. A public comment stated that the drawings were not submitted for all Centre St. repairs. If this is true, when will these drawings be submitted. (Commentor stated: "Centre St. GOL – National Grid issued stamp drawings that were an incomplete set (only one of 5 drawings actually appeared)")

Public Questions

1. Please confirm that in 2023, National Grid spent 17 million dollars on replacing pipes in Newton and spent \$200,000 on fixing leaks in Newton (this information was gathered from an investigation Newton residents completed in 2023 using public records of Gas System Enhancement Program (GSEP) plans, end-of-year accounting reports (GREC), end-of-year Service Quality reports (SQARs), and quarterly gas leak reports filed with the Mass. Department of Public Utilities (DPU), in addition to street surveys and other data from Newton public records).
2. Please confirm that in 2023, the \$200,000 spent was found to be much more effective in reducing leaks than the 17 million spent on replacing pipes (this information was gathered from an investigation Newton residents completed in 2023 using public records of Gas System Enhancement Program (GSEP) plans, end-of-year accounting reports (GREC), end-of-year Service Quality reports (SQARs), and quarterly gas leak reports filed with the Mass. Department of Public Utilities (DPU), in addition to street surveys and other data from Newton public records).
3. Please confirm that approximately 15,000 feet of pipe will be replaced in these four Grants of Location. Please also confirm the historical cost for pipe installation for National Grid was \$575 per foot so these four GOLs will cost 8.9 million dollars.
4. Please confirm the current average cost of fixing a leak is \$7,500 per leak.

#396-24, 397-24, 398-24, and 399-24

5. Please confirm that pipe replacement doesn't prevent new leaks (another study done by members of the public in 2023 found that during a pipe replacement project, five leaks appeared on that length of pipe in that segment on those streets and two leaks were reported after the replacement was finished. In 2022, 8 grade one leaks appeared during the replacement period (so the replacement caused leaks) and three leaks were reported after the replacement was finished).
6. Canterbury Rd GOL – Please address how National Grid intends to serve all houses in the area that are currently getting low pressure but will potentially be getting high pressure pipe system installed through this GOL? Is National Grid going to have to install pressure-reducing valves and replace pipes to the houses for even more expense for each house along the street?
7. According to member of the public, there are no reported leaks on Floral St so why are those pipes being replaced?
8. Since National Grid indicated that they are completing these projects due to public safety concerns, a member of the public asked about how much danger they are actually in from these gas leaks and if they would be noticed of what specific types of danger they are in by National Grid?
9. A member of the public interpreted the Centre St GOL as an increase in capacity on Church St. - please confirm that this project will not be an increase in capacity.
10. A member of the public said the leaks they are aware of are not in the gas mains but in the connections between the main and the house so in the Centre St. GOL, would National Grid fix these leaks as well?
11. How much disruption will the replacement on Church St. cause and if approved, what kind of notice will the public have before work starts?
12. Please provide the committee with the number of households in Newton that have had problems with water intrusion through leaky pipes into appliances.
13. Please clarify the definition of leak prone pipe compared to leaky pipes.

Link to study conducted by Newton residents - [2023 GSEP investigation Final draft.docx - Google Docs](#)