

Mayor's Update



The MBTA just notified us that noisy overnight work on the Green Line track and signal replacement project is scheduled to begin on Monday, April 8. Crews will begin near the Waban Station working Mondays through Fridays from 8:30 p.m. until 5:00 a.m.

The work will be noisy and difficult to live through for those living nearby, and it will be disruptive and inconvenient for commuters.

Shuttles will replace train service between Riverside and Newton Highlands on weeknights after 8:30 p.m. through July. On nights when the Red Sox play at Fenway Park, the shuttles will be delayed and will begin at 10:30 p.m.

Work is scheduled to continue after Waban Station at Newton Highlands, followed by Riverside through July, with work at Newton Centre and Chestnut Hill now scheduled for July through December.

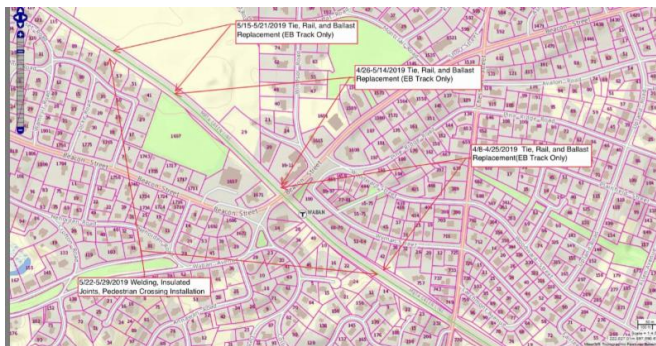
MBTA officials say the noisiest work will occur for several nights in each location before progressing to the next section of track.

But, they say, “to be clear, there will still be other crews working in each location after the noisiest work has occurred, but we expect the subsequent work activities to be less noisy than cutting the rail or removing concrete signal house foundations. Later this summer, after the majority of the work is complete, the final tamping of the track to the proper elevation will also be noisy and create vibrations.”

Work will be done over 17 weekends in 2019 and 2020 from 9:00 p.m. on Friday through 5:00 a.m. on Monday.

The work will modernize and improve service along the Green Line which has aging tracks and signals. It's designed to make service through Newton more reliable, faster, safer, and, when there are failures, response times faster.

Three crews will be working each night at up to three locations. One crew will replace rail, railroad ties and ballast, while another builds new signal equipment and replaces cable, and a third crew repairs catenary poles (a system of overhead wires used to supply electricity). The noisiest work will occur after 8:30 p.m. when crews cut the rails with a saw or torch, then later overnight when the track is being tamped to the proper elevation.



[Click this map to enlarge](#)

The MBTA is taking steps to try and minimize the noise.

Track panels are being assembled off-site, and they'll be getting to the work sites through MBTA rights of way. In addition:

- Self-adjusting backup alarms, silencers or mufflers will be used on equipment.
- Idling will be limited on trucks and equipment.
- Sound-deadening materials will be used to line dumping bins, hoppers (pyramid shaped containers) and trucks.
- Noise blankets will be used where possible.

The MBTA says the work dates are all best estimates and subject to change because of weather and other factors.

View more project details and maps [here](#), or information about the entire project [here](#). You can also email the MBTA Project Team [here](#), and can sign up for updates [here](#). The MBTA has set up a noise complaint hotline at 508-676-3550.

Arts and Culture Moving Forward

(With members of the Community Design for Arts and Culture Committee members Sachiko Isihara, Howard Sholkin, Adrienne Hartzell Knudsen, City Councilor Vicki Danberg, Gloria Gavis and Dana Hanson. Not pictured Lindsay Pike, Jonathan Yeo, and Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Culture Bob DeRubeis).



Even as we continue to mourn the passing of Linda Plaut, our beloved, longtime Director of Cultural Affairs, I am moving ahead with efforts to expand our support for arts and culture in Newton right now and to plan for cultural development in the City in the years ahead.

I have asked Commissioner Bob DeRubeis to formally expand his portfolio from Parks and Recreation to a new title that embraces arts and culture. His title will change from Commissioner of Parks and Recreation to Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Culture.

A full-time Director of Cultural Development will report to Commissioner DeRubeis. In addition, there will be a full-time administrative assistant reporting to the Director.

The Director position will be fully funded in the City's operating budget and the administrative assistant's position will be largely funded by the City (rather than through the revolving fund) with some financial support from Newton Community Pride. I am very grateful for our strong partnership with Newton Community Pride which builds community, helps attract volunteers, and provides financial and volunteer support for so many activities in the City from the July 4th Celebration to Halloween Window Decorating to a day of service through Newton Serves.

In the past, we have had somewhat confusing dual roles of the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs positions and Parks and Recreation efforts; going forward, we will consolidate

our work within the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department.

Interested in applying to be the Director? We will be posting the Director of Cultural Development position soon on Newton's Job Opportunities site so check [here](#).

In the meantime, our current Associate Director of the Mayor's Office for Cultural Affairs Paula Gannon and part-time assistant Lori Lass will continue to staff the current Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs. I am so grateful to both Paula and Lori; this has been a difficult period of transition and they have both stepped up gracefully and have done an exemplary job.

(With Chris Pitts, Chair of the Linda Plaut Newton Festival of the Arts; Howard Sholkin, President, Newton Community Pride; Susan Paley, VP, Village Bank Community Relations; and, Joe De Vito, President and CEO, Village Bank. Village Bank is the lead sponsor of several events including the Heartbreak Hill Road Race (April 14), NewtonSERVES (April 28), and several village concerts in July.)



In addition to these organizational and budgeting changes, we have been working on a longer-term vision for arts and culture. Last November, I pulled together a [Community Design for Arts & Culture Committee](#), chaired by Gloria Gavis. The group has been meeting internally since November and has developed an RFP for a consultant to help us write an arts and culture plan, and is ready to turn to the community for feedback and input. We invite you to:

- Join us for a Mayoral Meetup to discuss Arts & Culture next Tuesday, April 2 at 8:45 a.m. in the Mayor's Office on the second floor of City Hall (1000 Commonwealth Ave.). This will be a time to hear more about the work to date of the Community Design for Arts & Culture Committee and give us input.
- Look at the committee's website and sign up for updates [here](#).
- Be on the lookout for an upcoming survey about arts & culture in the city of Newton. We are looking for input from all residents—those who consider themselves “creatives”, those who enjoy being consumers of arts and culture, and even those who do not consider themselves to be supporters of the arts.

There's also an update about the auditorium at 150 Jackson Road (the former Aquinas School and the future home of Lincoln Eliot). I had hoped we could use it as a performing arts center even as we did renovations in the coming years. Unfortunately, the auditorium has a slew of issues that are likely to require significant investments. The 150 Jackson Road working group that is working the renovations at the site will decide on what to do with the auditorium as part of that process.

I am looking forward to this year's Newton Festival of the Arts in May and June which will be named in honor of Linda Plaut. Thank you to Newton Community Pride, lead sponsor The Village Bank, and festival chair Chris Pitts and the rest of the planning committee for their efforts to carry on Linda's vision. I am excited about all the future holds for arts and culture in our City.

Again, please join me on Tuesday, April 2nd at 8:45 a.m. in the Mayor's Office to

discuss arts and culture.

Warmly,

Ruthanne

