



# TOWN OF NATICK MASSACHUSETTS

**TO:** Amy Mistrot, Chair Board of Selectmen  
William Chenard, Acting Town Administrator

**FROM:** Jeremy Marsette, P.E.  
Director of Public Works

**DATE:** April 10, 2018

**SUBJECT: SOUTH MAIN STREET ROADWAY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT  
RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS DATED MARCH 20, 2018 – UTILITY POLES**

## Utility Pole Relocation

- \* *What is the rationale to move the electrical poles from the east to the west side of the street?*
- \* *Do the poles have to be moved?*
- \* *How many poles would be eliminated and remain if moved?*
- \* *It was confirmed that the poles could be moved in Alternative 1 as well as Alternative 3A. Why is the recommendation currently only for Alternative 3A?*
- \* *Would moving the poles require that electrical wires to be strung over the Johnson School playground?*

Any improvement, road resurfacing, sidewalk paving, or the like on South Main Street would require the relocation of existing utility poles. The location of many existing poles create compliance issues with the federal Americans with Disability Act (ADA) and Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB) Regulations. Utility poles or other obstructions may not be located within wheelchair ramps, driveway ramps, or at locations that restrict travel by pedestrians. Additionally, the existing utility poles are not offset adequately from the vehicle travel lanes, presenting a safety hazard. Please note that merely resurfacing the roadway pavement from curb to curb would trigger compliance with ADA and MAAB.

For Alternative 3A, consolidating the utility poles to one side of the roadway would provide the minimum required clearance around poles for the proper maintenance (snow plowing, sweeping, etc) of the sidewalk. A slightly wider sidewalk on one side of the roadway would provide the required clearance.

For Alternative 1, utility poles will also need to be relocated to meet ADA and MAAB requirements and to provide adequate clearance around poles for maintenance. It was envisioned that utility poles may be placed within the roadway layout beyond the back side of the sidewalk or placed in a wider sidewalk (similar to Alternative 3A). The proposed alternative cross-sections and renderings have depicted potential locations for utility poles.

The consolidation of utility poles to one side of the roadway would eliminate the need for approximately 30 of the existing poles along South Main Street (that represents about 1/3 of the total poles on this roadway). From our consultant's preliminary analysis it seems desirable to relocate the poles to the west

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side of South Main Street. However should the utility companies have preference, the poles may be located to the east side and the design intent of the alternatives maintained.

All proposed relocations of utility poles and overhead electrical wires would be within the existing roadway layout of South Main Street. No wires are proposed to be strung over the playground at Johnson Elementary School.

Eversource

- \* *Has Eversource been consulted on this project?*
- \* *If yes, are they willing/able to perform the move as planned?*
- \* *Do they think they can accommodate this extensive move within the town's timeline?*
- \* *Would there be any expense to Natick for this pole relocation strategy?*

Prior to meaningful coordination with Eversource Electric, a design alternative should be chosen and the design advanced to depict the proposed locations of each utility pole. South Main Street is a significant local and regional arterial roadway that provides key north-south access through and around Natick. The last reconstruction of South Main Street occurred over 35 years ago. It's hoped that the current project would have a similar or longer lifespan. We would recommend that the Town chose a design alternative that best meets its needs and then work with the utility companies to relocate their facilities to accommodate the design (the roadway design should drive the location of utility poles, not vice versa).

The existing private utilities are located within the public roadway layout South Main Street by Grant of Location approved by the Board of Selectmen. These grants require the utilities to move their poles and facilities (at their cost) to accommodate the needs of the public roadway (and any modifications thereof). It is likely that new or revised Grants of Location will be needed for the new locations of poles.

As noted previously, coordination and scheduling of utility pole relocations will be the primary schedule driver for the completion of the project. It would be our goal to have the relocations occur in advance of the roadway reconstruction, however the project may be constructed with some overlap of the two activities.