



15.

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE • EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Robert W. Healy, City Manager

Richard C. Rossi, Deputy City Manager

September 11, 2000

To The Honorable, The City Council:

In response to Awaiting Report Item No. 00-64, regarding a report on a new redesign process for North Massachusetts Avenue, the following is the text of a letter sent to the North Cambridge/Massachusetts Avenue area residents and businesses concerning this matter:

*We are writing to update you on the status of the sewer separation project on Massachusetts Avenue between Porter Square and the Alewife Brook. As you know the City is working with the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA), proposed separating the sanitary sewer and storm water lines in the area of Massachusetts Avenue as part of a larger sewer separation project. The proposed sewer separation project was in accordance with the Boston Harbor Federal Court Order, based on the MWRA Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Facilities Plan. Due to the increased level of cost associated with sewer separation in the Alewife watershed and after further analysis of the impacts of CSOs on water quality in the Alewife Brook, the MWRA has proposed revisions to the Facilities Plan. One of the MWRA's proposed changes would exclude sewer separation along Massachusetts Avenue in North Cambridge. MWRA has reported that the cost of sewer separation in the Massachusetts Avenue area outweigh the water quality benefits to the Alewife Brook.*

*Presently, the MWRA, is in the process of filing a Notice of Project Change that describes all of the proposed CSO Facilities Plan changes within the regional system. The revised MWRA plan will be submitted to the Massachusetts Environmental Protection Agency (MEPA) and is subject to a formal public comment period before it is accepted. As part of the public comment period, public meetings will be held in the impacted communities to include the City of Cambridge.*

*A decision by MEPA on the Notice of Project Change is expected in the late fall of this year. This decision will establish a scope and schedule for sewer separation work in the Alewife Brook area and will include a determination as to what is appropriate along Massachusetts Avenue. Obviously the schedule for surface enhancement along the Massachusetts corridor is dependent on this decision. Regardless of the MEPA decision, the City of Cambridge believes that sewer separation in this area will be required sometime in the future. However, any action or decision on the City's part to do sewer separation work prior to a MEPA determination on the revised CSO Facilities Plan would not be financially prudent.*

*Following MEPA's decision the City hopes to reestablish a schedule and budget for sewer work and a process to continue the planning of the surface enhancement changes on Massachusetts Avenue. You will be updated as events occur. The Department of Public Works and other City departments are committed to working with you. We will keep you informed as to the MWRA process as it moves ahead.*

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy  
City Manager

RWH/mec  
Attachment



2000 Things 2 Do in 2000

**Consent Agenda #15**

Relative to AW Rpt. #00-64,  
regarding a report on a new redesign  
process for North Mass. Ave.

**In City Council September 11, 2000**

**PLACED ON FILE**