

## Letter to Winthrop Residents

As the Town initiates a water and sewer infrastructure project in one of the busiest sections of our Town, I felt it timely to write and request your patience and understanding. The project on Walden, Pauline, Putnam, Jefferson and Fremont Streets will cause delay and inconvenience to most in our Town. Over the anticipated three and a half month duration, this project will impact nearly every business, their patrons, our teachers and every parent or guardian of school children. It will be trying because construction is messy and challenging, especially in heavily traveled areas.

As you may be impacted and frustrated, I ask you to think about the negative effect that the Pleasant Street water break of last winter had, or what it is like for those who had the unfortunate experience of living in an area where the Town has conducted emergency repairs to the water and sewer systems. For this project is largely in response to such events. Try if you can to think of those that have had their water and / or sewer services interrupted or may bear a disproportionate burden of flooding events. Our need to periodically invest in infrastructure is necessary to safely operate and maintain our systems even during times of fiscal strain because it is directly linked to our obligation of protecting public health.

It struck me as timely, albeit unfortunate, that two Massachusetts communities endured “boil water” orders over the last several weeks. If you can consider what residents in Milford and Gloucester were forced to deal with, the aggravation and anxiety of boiling water for washing, for teeth brushing, or just to make ice for a cool drink, I say this not from any concern about the quality of our water, but to highlight the urgency of maintaining and operating healthy municipal systems. I can imagine that most in those communities, while probably outraged now, possess a new appreciation for these systems, and may even find it perplexing, as I do, that it is easier for electricity, cable TV and telephone purveyors to invest in their systems than it is for those of us in municipal government.

The care and maintenance of these systems is important business and something that the Town takes seriously. While I ask you to support and be understanding of this project. I must also tell you that I have no concerns about the quality of water in our pipes. The tests that we undertake and the reports that I review all tell me clearly that the MWRA water is some of highest quality; best protected and robustly design systems in this country.

Thank you in advance for your assistance in keeping the project area safe. Please honor signs that may restrict parking or may detour your routes. Feel free to utilize available parking in the Town’s lots on Hagman and Putnam Streets. Please obey the instructions of the Police and advise children in your care to respect closed streets and sidewalks. Construction zones can be noisy and dangerous, so please be careful.

Dave Hickey  
Director of Public Works