
**TOWN OF SOUTHBOROUGH
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**

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DATE: February 9, 2009

MEMORANDUM

**TO: The Southborough Board of Selectmen and
The Southborough Planning Board**
**VIA: Jean Kitchen, Town Administrator and
Vera Kolias, Town Planner**
CC: John Woodsmall, Town Engineer
FROM: Karen Galligan, DPW Superintendent
SUBJECT: Main Street 25% Design Update

The Southborough Department of Public Works (DPW) is providing this update on the Main Street project for the benefit of both Boards. The 25% Main Street plans were submitted to the appropriate state agencies on June 30, 2008. The DPW along with its engineering design consultants on the Main Street Project, SEA Consultants, Inc. (SEA), met with members of the District 3 MassHighway Department (MHD) in December 2008 to discuss the 25% design submittal. During this meeting it became apparent that the 25% plans submitted were not acceptable to the MHD for several reasons. The main concerns were with the survey and the layout. MHD is currently checking the survey data provided by SEA.

The comments regarding the layout are driving the need for some redesign of the project. The main sticking points from all the public meetings, whether or not there should be public parking on Main Street and the final disposition of the wall at the Common, continue to cause problems. The residents, Boards and the DPW had compromised on a six foot shoulder instead of a parking lane and a reduced sidewalk width at the Common in order to prevent takings from residences across from the Common and to prevent moving the wall at the Common. The MHD is not in support of the submitted layout. Although design exceptions are allowed, they do not believe that there is any instance where a six foot shoulder would be acceptable on a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) project. The MHD will allow their design standards to be debated as to applicability and context on a project in the Design Exception Report (DER), however, the MHD believes the six foot shoulder to be a safety hazard. At a minimum the DER has to be resubmitted, however, knowing that the MHD is not willing to accept the six foot shoulder, it is not prudent to resubmit the DER only to have it rejected and still end up in redesign.

Therefore, the DPW has contracted with Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB) to meet with the Boards and with residents and develop some conceptual designs for discussion and development. The DPW chose to change engineering design consultants based on the work completed to date, the comments received from MHD and the effectiveness that SEA conveyed designs to the public. The change in engineering firms will likely delay the 25% redesign submittal about three months.

This redesign does not delay the need for the Town to move forward with any articles required to perform utility undergrounding. The DPW has an engineering design article which may have to be postponed indefinitely at the Annual Town Meeting (ATM) due to the fact that the Town has not received the feasibility study from the Main Street Council. The DPW does not believe that it is reasonable to request funds to design the underground utility system unless residents are fully aware of the final construction cost to move the utilities underground. However, being ready for construction is a main factor in getting listed on the TIP and therefore, the Town should continue to move forward with the project design in order to get funding in 2012.