

Major \$1.1M project underway at the Nubble

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YORK -- A significant, three-agency project began this week on Nubble Road that will result in benefits to residents and visitors alike.

The York water and sewer districts and the Department of Public Works are jointly undertaking a combined \$1.1 million project that will involve replacement of mains for both districts and installation of a sidewalk and paved shoulder.

The work will take place on the first 1,800 feet of the road, starting at Long Beach Avenue and ending just before Nubble Road Extension. During the project, it will likely be necessary to close the road overnight at certain times and reroute traffic up Broadway on the back side of the Nubble.

“Our intent is to make Nubble Road one lane of traffic as much as possible, but people should know if they try to get through, there are going to be long delays,” said water district Superintendent Don Neumann. “This is going to be an impact. The priority is the postal carriers, school buses and emergency services.”

Signs have been made directing motorists to Nubble businesses, along with signs directing them to the Cape Neddick Light Station -- the main reason for much of the traffic on the Nubble's roads. York Police Lt. Owen Davis said while flaggers will be stationed at the bottom of Nubble Road and at Broadway officers will also be on hand Wednesday through Friday of this week, “just to help assist people because we're familiar with the town and the flaggers may not be.”

He said York Beach Fire and York Ambulance Association are aware of the closures and have worked out a plan to ensure they can get to all residents “with very limited delays and response times.”

Preparation for the project has been years in the making, as it involves three separate agencies coordinating budgets, staff and time. York police have also been involved in planning that kicked into high gear this year.

The three agencies will work to keep road closures to a minimum, but closures will be necessary -- particularly for the sewer portion of the project, said Superintendent Tim Haskell. For one thing, sewer mains are installed down the center of the road, not the side. The circa-1900 main that will be replaced is only buried 2.5 to 3 feet deep; but because sewer is gravity fed, “that is not really deep enough. We need a better pitch.”

That’s particularly true on the steep grade from Long Beach Avenue to the top of the hill past the Cutty Sark, he said. District engineers have determined that in portions, the main has to be 14 feet below street level to create the correct grade. But that means dealing with “Nubble blue” granite, said Haskell, a bluish-tinted granite so solid that there’s not a seam in it. “It’s so solid, it’s super hard to get out of there,” he said.

Because of that, “there are absolutely going to be times when we have to shut down the road. They won’t be frequent, but they will happen,” he said.

The York Water District is replacing about 1,800 feet of pre-1929 mains that currently create “marginal fire flows,” said Neumann. “And these days, a lot of big homes have replaced small homes out there, so it’s important to replace this main.”

Water District crews have been in the project area ending at 71 Nubble Road much of the past several weeks hooking up 3,000 feet of temporary mains to all of the 50 or so affected homes. Neumann said

crews will “essentially be digging out dead pipe.” The water district main is laid on the ocean side of the road.

He said while the entire Nubble needs water main replacement, at least the district can put a good dent in it with this project. The idea is that in future years, the town and water district will work in tandem to continue the work in phases.

Plans call for the water and sewer districts to hand the project over to the town DPW in early October. Superintendent Dean Lessard said once its work is completed, that section of Nubble Road will have two 10-foot wide travel lanes (narrower than the current road by one foot), a 3-foot paved shoulder and a 5-foot sidewalk on the ocean side of the road. All of the work is being done in the public right-of-way, he said.

This is the first time the Nubble will have a sidewalk, something residents of the area and visitors alike have requested for years, he said. “You go up there and you see people walking in the road with their wagons and their carriages because there’s nowhere else for them to go. The underlying complaint is that improvements need to be done.”

Lessard said the goal is to have the road and sidewalk paved and open before snow files.

In all, the Water District is spending \$500,000 for its portion of the work, and the town and sewer district, \$300,000 apiece.

“We’ve listened to people and we’re doing what they asked,” said Lessard. “Yes, it’s going to be inconvenient for a while. But we ask everyone to be patient with us because the end result is going to be fantastic.”