

May 15, 2012

From the Project Engineer:

“Water main installation for Loop one was completed on Friday, May 4 and construction appears to be accelerating with improving weather. A hydrant has been installed on West Madrona (about 50 feet north of the old hydrant location) so that the water truck and fire truck can be filled if necessary. The pipe install is going well from a technical standpoint: the material excavated so far has been excellent for installing water mains, with easy compactable sands and clays, few large rocks and virtually no sharp ones rocks, good soil density supporting the pipe, and excellent cover material. These are very in-line with both our specifications and the pipe manufacturer’s instructions for pipe installation. (As required by construction standards, the inspectors perform compaction testing on regular basis and document the results in their log books.) With a little luck this will be the course of the project!

We have experienced line breaks and leaks in the past two weeks, and Washington Water has done a superb job of getting on site quickly for samples, and chlorinating the reservoir as necessary. We can unfortunately expect this to continue for another two months, because the old system is almost impossible to find and is very brittle when it is “located by excavator”. The contractor has gone to great lengths, with several days of hand digging logged so far, trying to minimize breaks. This week we have made several improvements to our process for locating water main, which will hopefully reduce the frequency of these breaks.

This week the construction crew will be moving along West Madrona to Maple, and then will continue clockwise along Loop 5 (Maple to West Herron Blvd to East Herron Blvd and back to Maple Dr.). The portion along Maple Drive has the highest density of underground phone and power lines, so if something is going to go wrong this will probably be when it happens. Hopefully the locate services are accurate and the one Century Link break experienced so far is the only failure. If a second crew hits the ground this week, or if locating services are delayed, it is likely that they will start work at Herron Lane or West Yew Blvd.

We have fielded a couple questions on how the process will work and when the system will be transferred that deserve an answer so that everyone is on the same page with what to expect. The main line installation requires more large equipment and the most disturbing to normal island life, and is being completed in a first phase between now and late June or early July.

In a second phase the crews will make a second “lap” around the island installing service laterals (the pipe from the mainline to your meter) and meter setters (the little box that the meter sits in), which can be accomplished with smaller equipment and is less disruptive, probably completed in July. Once the system is flushed and purity samples show the new lines are clean and ready to go, meters will be installed and service lines connected, and you will be on the new system. Once the final work has been done the contractor will pick a clear day and give the roads a final grade to restore them to their previous state. The reason for this phasing is to get the work that requires the heaviest equipment and is the most disruptive to island life done before your island gets busy this summer.”