

## **Newton Urban Tree Commission**

### Proposed Roadway Construction Improvements for Adams Street: Comments

It would take only one walk along Adams Street between Watertown and Washington Streets to persuade anyone that this project is both necessary and overdue. Nor would it be easy to argue that the existing trees, whose roots appear to have caused much of the damage, should be preserved (were that even possible).

Rather than looking back at how the sidewalk on Adams Street came to its present condition, we would prefer to offer recommendations to help prevent a recurrence in the future. The people who live and work on Adams Street will surely feel the impact on their environment when three-quarters of their remaining street trees are removed. This impact will persist for decades as the existing trees that now provide shade and soften noise are replaced by small, new trees. It will take at least twenty years before Adams Street again has a tree canopy.

To ensure the success of the Adams Street tree replacement, we recommend the following:

1. Employ best management practices for sidewalk construction and tree planting (proper base to limit root damage, cross-slope for stormwater flow, properly sized and prepared planting pits). We understand that Marc Welch is already planning to use replacement trees that are slightly larger (in trunk diameter) than Newton's usual street tree replacements.
2. Adopt the caliper inch replacement approach that the city has used for school projects and that private contractors are required to use when removing street trees. The result would be more trees being planted than would be with the proposed one-for-one formula. The additional trees could be planted in the surrounding neighborhood to help meet this goal.
3. Allocate human and other resources to ensure that all the Adams St. trees thrive in the coming years – including the 13 trees that are to remain (per the June 23, 2016 Plan).
4. Provide Adams St. property-owners the opportunity to "host" trees on their side of the sidewalk where appropriate space exists. This would not only add to the tree coverage, but would involve residents even more in caring for their new urban forest.

We believe these recommendations will help ensure that the new street layout and plan will provide long-lasting benefits for future generations.

Submitted by: Barbara Smiley, Chair  
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