E. Wisconsin and N. Broadway Could Fully Open to Vehicle Traffic and Hop Service Later this Week

Mix of Underground Utilities Complicates Water Main Repair

Some restoration work has already begun at the site of a water main break at the intersection of N. Broadway and E. Wisconsin Ave., and Milwaukee Water Works is hopeful that the intersection will fully reopen to vehicle traffic and the Hop by Saturday.

Water Works expects crews to restore the western half of the intersection by the end of the day on Thursday, allowing vehicle traffic traveling southbound on N. Broadway, and eastbound on E. Wisconsin turning south onto N. Broadway, as well as a resumption of streetcar service, as early as Friday.

"Repairing this water main has been uniquely challenging," said Water Works Superintendent Patrick Pauly. "We appreciate the patience of business owners and the public as we work to make repairs, restore streetcar operations, and reopen the street."

Around 4:30pm on afternoon of Wednesday, August 30, a section of water main installed in 1872 failed, releasing an estimated 1.6 million gallons of water. Crews from Milwaukee Water Works controlled the main break by 6:29pm.

There was no damage to the streetcar tracks, but lost water created a void that partially undercut the track zone. Engineers recommended installation of a temporary structure to buttress the tracks as a safety measure.

The failed water main runs east-west, underneath the northern side of E. Wisconsin Ave. Work to replace the main is expected to continue through Thursday. After the water main is fully repaired, crews will backfill the excavated site and pour concrete to restore the street.

The presence of a variety of utility infrastructure located at E. Wisconsin and N. Broadway created a number of challenges, included properly shoring the excavation site and the need to install 60 feet of new water main in close proximity to existing facilities.

Milwaukee Water Works is working closely with WE Energies, private contractor MidCity Corporation, and engineering firm HNTB to ensure the repairs are completed safely, with minimal disruption, and with work to repair different structures occurring simultaneously when possible.

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