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- events
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ALLSTON BRIGHTON

Oak Square water main break floods apartments, disrupts service, closes busy road

Posted by Matt Rocheleau February 7, 2011 12:53 PM

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(Courtesy: Nathan Spencer)

A neighborhood resident took this photo of repair crews on the scene Monday morning.

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

A water main broke on Washington Street in Oak Square for the second time in less than six months and caused flooding in two apartment buildings, a day-long water service disruption for some neighboring residents Sunday and traffic diversions around the busy Brighton roadway, according to officials.

The pipe that broke during the very early morning Sunday near where Washington and Brackett streets meet was several blocks away from and not the same pipeline that burst on that roadway in August, said Thomas Bagley, spokesman for the Boston Water and Sewer Commission.

He did not immediately know the exact time the break occurred or exactly when crews responded, however he said both occurred during the "very early morning" Sunday. Pipe repairs were completed and the water main was turned back on at around 2 a.m. Monday.

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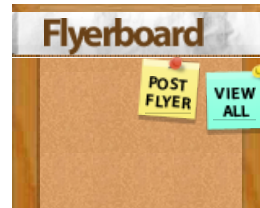
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"It was very difficult to repair," engineering-wise, he said, adding that the closed street is expected to reopen to traffic at around 2 p.m. Monday once paving of the repair site is complete.

He said no injuries were reported as a result of the break, but that two apartment buildings reported flooding. Bagley did not know the extent of the damage to either building.

Around six nearby buildings had their water service disrupted for around 24 hours, and during Super Bowl Sunday, while water flowing through the pipe was turned off so it could be fixed, the spokesman said.

The break snarled this morning's commute through the busy Oak Square area. It also rerouted three MBTA bus routes causing six stops to be omitted, according to [mbta.com](#).

News of the water main break was first reported on Twitter and [local blog Universal Hub](#).

"I'm hearing reports that Oak Square is in chaos. Ambulances trying to get through, cars and people everywhere," [said Brighton resident Nathan Spencer on Twitter](#) at around 8 a.m. Monday.

When contacted, Spencer, who is a public member of the MBTA Riders Oversight Committee, said in an e-mail that he did not commute through the area himself, but he heard an account from his wife, Jennifer Spencer, who took the T's 501 bus Monday morning.

"What I can tell you is that it sounded like chaos, much like [August]'s water main break on Washington Street by Beechcroft Street. The MBTA sent out T-alerts and had been diligent about informing people, but even though the street was closed at 5 a.m., there wasn't anyone directing the MANY bus commuters or traffic for that matter," he wrote. "I followed up with City Councilor Mark Ciommo who got a police presence down there."






The repair costs will not be known for several weeks Bagley said, and the cause of the break remains under investigation. There were no reports of any excavating being performed in the area prior to the break he said, adding that the recent cold weather may have played a role in the pipe rupturing.

On Aug. 25 a 12-inch water pipe broke near 509 Washington St. at around 5 a.m. disrupting service for around 50 people until early afternoon and closing the roadway until that evening.

After that incident, Bagley [told the Globe and Boston.com](#) the break was likely due to aging. That pipe was first installed in the early 1900s and relined with concrete in 1972, he said in August.

Boston is home to New England's oldest and largest water and sewer systems, according to the commission's website.

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