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ALLSTON BRIGHTON

MBTA plans to replace B branch rail in Packard's Corner area of Allston

Posted by Matt Rocheleau January 4, 2013 03:04 PM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

The MBTA plans to replace nearly 250 feet of rail in the Packard's Corner area of Allston along the B branch of the Green Line.

The T has already completed about half of the replacement project and expects to finish the work next week, when temperatures are expected to reach adequate levels for the construction to be done, agency spokesman Joe Pesaturo said in an e-mail.

The work is scheduled to be done overnight, when the T is not in service.

The project will replace rail that is about 12 years old on both the inbound and outbound tracks. The old rail is "still usable, but an upgrade is needed," Pesaturo said.

The construction is "part of regularly scheduled 'state of good repair' work," the spokesman said. "The reason for all track maintenance work – throughout the system – is to keep the rails in safe and reliable condition."

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The tracks at Packard's Corner bend as they cut through the busy intersection of Commonwealth and Brighton avenues. Vehicles drive over the rail as they pass through the junction.

Pesaturo said that "curved rail and rail subjected to motor vehicle traffic needs to be replaced more often than straight rail or rail that is within an exclusive right-of-way."

On Dec. 18, the front wheels of the second car of a trolley derailed as the train pulled into the Packard's Corner station. No one was in the car that partially derailed, officials have said. No injuries were reported.

The cause of the derailment "remains under investigation," Pesaturo said adding that "investigators are looking at the actions of the trolley operator."

The trolley slipped off new rail that had been installed the weekend before as part of the ongoing replacement project.

But, Pesaturo said that officials at the public transit agency have no concerns "at all" about the newly-installed rail. "The rail has been thoroughly inspected and tested."

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