

## MEMORANDUM

To: City Council President Ed Cameron, Public Works and Safety Chair Jim McCauley, and Councillors  
From: Mayor Sean Reardon  
Date: February 26, 2024  
Re: Plummer Spring Bridge Updates

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The Administration is providing an update to the City Council regarding the Plummer Spring Bridge in response to the memorandum received by West Newbury Town Manager Angus Jennings. The information provided by Town Manager Jennings is very helpful and the Administration wants to provide updates that have occurred since the submission of that communication.

Members of the Administration met with Town Manager Jennings and Select Board Member Rick Parker on February 14 to discuss the current situation and next steps. The City of Newburyport is actively applying for a new Small Bridge Grant from MassDOT, and has been informed that we would be a strong candidate for such funding. The City and Town also believe that we are eligible for additional Small Bridge Grants in the FY25 cycle and plan to apply, which would further reduce the unfunded portion of the bridge.

As Town Manager Jennings outlined, the City plans to work with the Town of West Newbury to enter a new Intermunicipal Agreement (IMA) that will resolve outstanding issues in this joint project. We will need to decide which entity will be responsible for procurement, contract and construction management, financial administration and grant reporting, and other items. An agreement will also need to be reached on cost allocations and processes for how to handle cost overruns. The memo from Town Manager Jennings suggested having a City Council member assist with the IMA process because of their eventual role in approval. The Administration is open to this or any other involvement from the Council that is logistically feasible and allowable under Open Meeting Law provisions. The City is waiting for a draft from the Town of its updates to the previous IMA and will review alongside the City Solicitor when these materials are received.

The Administration's approach to this project has been to work with West Newbury to support grant applications, and to pursue any available state, federal, and other funding possible. While this bridge does not receive substantial vehicle traffic, especially from Newburyport residents, the City has an obligation to maintain its infrastructure and has a share in the responsibility for replacing this bridge. It is a business decision for the Town and City to agree on the share of local funding each municipality will be responsible for after determining how much total funding is needed. The City and Town will plan to have this be one of the terms in the Intermunicipal Agreement.

The City and Town also discussed pursuing additional funding by asking for assistance through its state and federal representatives. We will continue to pursue all available funding sources and look for ways to control costs throughout this process.