

MAYOR'S UPDATE
May 13, 2024
Mayor Sean R. Reardon

FY25 Budget:

As Local Pulse would say, it's the most wonderful time of the year. You have your budget binders in front of you tonight. Putting together this budget and capital improvement plan is a monumental effort and I want to thank all my department heads for the time put into their budgets. I also want to thank Finance Director Ethan Manning and Chief of Staff Andrew Levine for putting it all together. I'll have more to say at the budget hearings but I think we have put together a thoughtful budget that moves the community forward responsibly during challenging economic times. I want to thank Budget and Finance Chair and Ward 1 Councilor Sharif Zeid for putting together the budget hearing schedule. We look forward to presenting all the pieces of this comprehensive budget to you.

Projects Updates:

We have a number of projects currently in progress across the city. I wanted to give a quick update on them to the council.

Bulkhead:

The Bulkhead Rehabilitation project is on schedule for completion this summer and is moving towards substantial completion in the coming weeks. The contractor conducted the final concrete pour during the first week of May, and the crane barge is planned to depart Newburyport this month. The contractor is currently working on a number of details such as fabricating and installing piling brackets, the revised gangway location for accessing the floats, electrical shorepower and water lines, pile coatings, and rub boards on the pile float guides.

Market Landing Park:

We are nearing completion of the Market Landing Park expansion project. The next few weeks we will be installing park amenities and removing the mounds of dirt. There will be a period of time where we will need to keep the public off the grass but we are on track for a ribbon cutting sometime during the first week in June. DPS has also been working with Waterfront Trust to finalize maintenance plans for the expanded park this year.

Fire Station:

The mechanical, plumbing, fire protection, and electrical rough-in of the piping, wiring, conduit, and ductwork for the station is close to completion, and the contractor is beginning to install some of the sheetrock for the interior walls. Completion is still anticipated in the fall of 2024; coordination issues with a number of subcontractors have delayed the overall project's schedule by approximately 16 days at this point. Drains and rebar have been installed in the Apparatus Bay's floor in preparation for the concrete slab, and a subcontractor is installing the radiant heating tubing in preparation for the concrete pour. The contractors have begun installing the building's exterior siding at the rear of the structure. The site contractor has been bringing in material and conducting some of the grading on the site.

Phillips Drive:

A huge hurdle was passed last Friday – the last major drainage piping intersection has been completed. All drainage easements are complete. Utilities are almost complete. The remaining work includes 18 water services, 2 water main tie-ins, and some short sections of drain pipe. We feel they're around four weeks away from completion of these tasks. After that, what remains is the cleanup, loaming and seeding areas, and scheduling asphalt binder course for roads and sidewalks. We are assuming that paving will take place in July and August and the top coat paving will take place next year.

Bartlet Mall Playground and Lower Atkinson Playground:

The Bartlet Mall Playground will be closed again beginning tomorrow while the contractor repairs sections of the poured-in-place surfacing. We apologize for the inconvenience and expect this to be the final closing of the playground before it is officially opened. A ribbon cutting is scheduled for June 13 and we hope all will join as we celebrate the City's first universally-accessible playground. At Lower Atkinson there is just a little more site work to do on the playground but people can use it at this time.

Port Rec at 59 Low Street:

There is a Zoning amendment request in the packet tonight to include Community Center use in the I1 portion of the industrial park. This is an important step in the process of moving NRYS to 59 Low Street as it will allow the design team to file for Site Plan Review with the Planning Board and Notice of Intent with the Conservation Commission. These two regulatory agencies may make minor changes to the design, which will need to be incorporated into a final Construction Document set for bid pricing. We heard from the Council that there is a desire to see final numbers for this project, so this Zoning change is sequentially the next necessary step.

Marquand Lane Study:

DPS is reviewing consultant options, preparing scope and determining next steps. They have already had one preliminary conversation with an engineering firm and will begin the consultant solicitation process once the scope is complete.

Low Street/ Colby Farm Lane Intersection:

DPS, along with consultant The Engineering Corp (TEC), will be hosting a public meeting to seek feedback from the community relating to improving the safety of the intersection of Low Street at Colby Farm Lane and North Atkinson Street. In addition to overall intersection improvements, we will discuss the possibility of installing a sidewalk on the west side of North Atkinson Street from Low Street to the driveway of the Bresnahan Elementary School.

The meeting will be held at the Newburyport Senior Community Center located at 331 High Street on May 22, 2024 at 6pm in the first-floor meeting rooms A and B. Our goal at this meeting is to receive feedback from the community regarding safety improvement concerns and possible options to address such issues.

Streets and Sidewalks Work:

The city has begun the 2024 construction season and paving is in full swing. All affected streets have been reclaimed or milled and in the following weeks the final topcoat paving on streets that have no sidewalk work scheduled will take place.

The streets that are undergoing sidewalk rehabilitation have been reclaimed and the binder course has been laid, with sidewalk work to continue through the summer/fall. We understand the impacts construction places on residents and appreciate your continued patience and cooperation throughout the construction season.

Non- Sidewalk Streets: The roadways noted below will have castings adjusted to grade and will be completely paved with topcoat by the end of May. Currently parking restrictions will remain in effect until final paving is completed. All timelines are estimates, and will be attempted to be followed as closely as possible, weather permitting.

Alberta Avenue, Bowlen Avenue, Charmanski Drive, Charron Drive, Crow Lane, Spring Lane

Streets with Sidewalk Rehabilitation: Lime Street, Johnson Street, Middle Street, and Eagle Street include sidewalk rehabilitation as well as roadway paving. They have been reclaimed and the binder course has been laid, with sidewalk work to continue through the summer/fall.

Castings will be adjusted to grade by the end of May and sidewalk work will commence approximately around the end of May and continue through the summer / fall. This is a phased approach, where curbing will be elevated, adjusted, reset and sidewalk will then be installed or reset. The city is rehabilitating over two miles of sidewalk this season.

This work will occur in stages. Currently parking restrictions will remain in effect until castings have been adjusted. At the conclusion of this work (around end of May) the City will lift parking restrictions and parking bans will be limited to construction zones only as sidewalk work progresses and will be posted as such. The city will post updates as construction progresses.

Final paving on streets with sidewalk rehabilitation will occur after all sidewalk work has been completed. At such time castings will be adjusted to final grade and the top coat of asphalt will be laid. All timelines are estimates, and will be attempted to be followed as closely as possible, weather permitting. Sidewalk work will begin on Lime Street and progress in the order listed below.

Lime Street – Sidewalk work to commence after Memorial Day weekend.

Johnson Street – To follow Lime Street

Middle Street – To follow Johnson Street

Eagle Street – To follow Middle Street

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