

Below is the weekly report for the two weeks ending today, August 23, 2024.

Items for Newsletters:

1. **Student Move-In:** As a reminder, UD student move-in is this weekend, and there will be traffic impacts around town as a result. Please be mindful when driving around town as there will be many more people than over the summer. Thank you for your patience!
2. **Parks on Draft:** Tonight, Friday, August 23, 2024, there is another edition of Parks on Draft in Handloff Park. We have partnered with the Friends of Fusion Foundation again for this event, and there will be live music and food alongside the summer beer garden.
3. **Community Day:** Community Day is scheduled Sunday, 9/15.
4. **New London Avenue School Museum at the GWC:** The grand opening for the New London Avenue School Museum is scheduled for August 24th at the George Wilson Center from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.
5. **City newsletter:** To sign up for the City's email newsletter, [click here](#).

Public Works and Water Resources

1. **Lead And Copper Sampling:** Newark's Public Works and Water Resources Department has reinstituted the Water Quality Ambassador Program to help confirm the safety of the drinking water within the City and comply with state and federal requirements. Recent tests demonstrate that the lead and copper levels are in compliance with EPA and State levels, but the City is required to perform sampling every three years from at least 30 unique sources and submit to the Delaware Office of Drinking Water. We thank all of our residents that have already signed up to participate. We expect to submit our report and receive confirmation of compliance by October of 2024.
2. **Water Main Replacement – Dallam Road and Lark Drive:** PWWR has successfully completed the water main installation on Tyre Avenue and has restored the work area just in time for UD students to return to town and Newark High School students to return to classes. Now that the downtown areas are complete, our contractor has moved back to Dallam Road to complete water service replacement and tie customers into the new main. The second crew will be moving to Lark Drive to begin water main replacement on Monday, August 26th. Notices have been issued to all customers on Lark Drive that will be impacted by the planned improvements.
3. **Water Main Flushing:** Crews have successfully completed our annual water main flushing program. Flushing water mains is important because it removes sediment and deposits that can build up over time and can negatively affect water quality. Flushing at the appropriate velocities can remove these sediments and deposits (iron and manganese) and improves

taste, odor and clarity. Our flushing program also allows us to exercise valve throughout the distributions system and verify functionality of many of our fire hydrants. Public Works has become increasingly more efficient thanks to our GIS team who has leveraged the power of ArcGIS software to develop a workforce application to assign tasks to our crews in such a way that makes our program more efficient and reduces impacts to customers.

- 4. Street Improvement Program – Bent Lane:** PWWR has also successfully completed the pave and rehabilitation of East Park Place and Choate Street just in time for UD students to return to town. Our contractor is actively working on curb replacements on Bent Lane (Briar Lane to Casho Mill Road). Curb replacement is anticipated to be completed by Thursday, 8/29 (weather depending). The concrete crews are scheduled to remain in the city to work on the remaining street segments over the next several weeks. Our contractor's paving crew will be unavailable until the end of October due to contractual obligations on DeDOT projects. Scotch Pine Road will be the first location to be milled once the crew mobilize back to Newark. Locations that have curbs replaced will be temporarily patched until the paving crew mobilizes back to the City for mill and overlay operations.
- 5. Speed Humps:** Speed humps on Country Club Drive and Madison Drive were removed on Thursday, 8/22. Speed analyses has been conducted by NPD and the data has been passed along to Public Works for review. We will review both the pre and post speed hump speed data for each road segment and provide a recommendation as to if we believe the speed humps have been effective in these locations and whether or not we recommend permanent speed humps be installed. A cursory review of the speed data indicates the speed humps were effective in reducing speeds in each location, however it should be noted that the pre-speed hump analyses also indicates neither of these road segments have significant violator counts. Madison Drive had the highest percentage of violation counts, likely due to the lower posted speed limit.
- 6. Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation – Main Street:** Our contractor (Insituform) has successfully completed all but one segment of sanitary sewer scheduled to be lined this year. The lining process did require several Main Street businesses to close early for an evening with one area requiring a multi-night disruption, but in doing so we have effectively added 60+ years of useful life to the sewer segments lined under this contract. Our contractor will be returning in the Fall to complete the lining of the final segment of sanitary sewer that crosses the White Clay Creek north of McKees Lane. We will provide an update on when they plan to remobilize to Newark to complete the final lining once we receive an updated schedule.
- 7. Lead Service Line Identification Survey (Ongoing):** Our final \$1000 winner has been selected. While the free water initiative is complete, we still welcome any surveys to update our database. Newark Water customers are encouraged to complete the online survey at this link: <https://newarkde.gov/lead>. The data we collect will help complete a required inventory of service lines and reduce operating costs for the water utility.

Planning and Development

1. Land Use

- a. DART Connect celebrated one year of service in Newark on August 7. In its first year, the program has served 10,901 riders. The highest ridership month was July 2024 with 1,223 riders despite the University of Delaware not being in session. Staff is working with DART to schedule a more detailed update on DART Connect for a fall Council meeting after the initial round of departmental budget hearings.
- b. Planning Commission met on August 6. The following items were considered on the agenda:
 - i. Rezoning, minor subdivision, and three special use permits for the proposal to build a Dash-In convenience store, gas pumps, car wash and EV charging station on the existing Rodeway Inn/Wise Guyz site located at [1110 South College Avenue](#) – approved by a vote of 5-0.
 - ii. Major subdivision for the proposal to build a five story mixed use building with retail space, parking and a lobby on the first floor and 52 apartments on the upper floors behind the existing Starbucks/Funtivity/Helen's Sausage House buildings located at [141 East Main Street](#) – approved by a vote of 5-0
- c. Planning issued final approval for two administrative subdivisions for [244 Kells Avenue](#) and [125 and 127 Sandy Drive](#), which have been forwarded for signatures and recordation. Planning also issued preliminary approval for two administrative subdivisions for [174 East Main Street](#) and [502 South College Avenue](#). Notices have been sent to adjacent property owners who had 10 days to comment. No objections were received, so these plans will be granted final approval.
- d. Staff prepared the following items for the August 19 Council meeting:
 - i. [July 2, 2024 Planning Commission minutes](#)
 - ii. [Parking Division Increased Revenue Streams and Cost Savings memo](#) – Council approved moving forward with items 1-6 and not moving forward with item 7.
 - iii. [420 South College Avenue Nuisance Abatement Plan application cover memo](#) – Council approved the abatement of 14 points for this property with a 5-2 vote.
- e. Staff received the following development plan submissions:
 - i. Comprehensive Development Plan amendment, rezoning, major subdivision by site plan approval, and parking waiver to construct a five-story mixed use building with retail space and parking on the first floor and 32 three-bedroom apartment units on the second through fifth floors at [339. 341 and 349 East Main Street](#) on August 5 (fourth submission – scheduled for Planning Commission on September 3).
 - ii. Comprehensive Development Plan amendment and major subdivision by site plan approval to create fee simple lots for the existing Sutton Place townhouse condominiums located at [711 Barksdale Road](#) on August 5 (first submission). No new construction is proposed as part of this project.

- iii. Comprehensive Development Plan amendment, rezoning and major subdivision by site plan approval to construct 13 townhouse-style apartments located at [55 and 67 West Cleveland Avenue and 46, 52 and 54 Church Street](#) on August 9 (second submission).
- f. Staff issued the following Subdivision Advisory Committee comments:
 - i. Administrative subdivision for [502 South College Avenue](#) on August 6.
- g. Community Planner I, Lauren Dykes started in her new position on August 5. The Land Use Division is fully staffed for the first time since December 27.

2. Code Enforcement

- a. Applications for certificates of completion have been received for all units in Building 3000 of Fountainview which was heavily damaged by flooding in March 2023. Final inspections are underway with all units on the third and fourth floors complete and the second floor in progress.
- b. Temporary certificates of occupancy for 40 apartment units and a temporary certificate of completion for the building at 268 East Main Street were issued. All 56 units are eligible for TCO and the applicant intends to apply for the remaining 16 units once they are leased.
- c. Code Enforcement responded to a call of a vehicle collision into the building at 77 New London Rd (St. John AM Church) on August 9. Upon arrival the building was condemned and marked off with caution tape. Later that morning, Code Enforcement visited the site and met with church leadership and advised them that the church could not be used. However, there is a small fellowship room in the back of the building unaffected by the collision and damage with sufficient means of egress and facilities that can be used during the repair process. The insurance company for the church has been contacted and a clean-up company has been hired. The notice given to the church requires a structural analysis by a design professional and permits will be required for all repairs.
- d. A multiple alarm fire occurred at Southgate Apartments affecting the 18 Building. This building consists of 21 units with 19 of them being occupied. No injuries were reported, and the building is now secure. The Code Enforcement and Fire teams will be working to get the clean-up and reconstruction underway as soon as possible. Red Cross and UD Student Life are working to find housing for the displaced residents.
- e. Property at 85 West Park Place was condemned as a Dangerous Building and Unfit for Habitation. This stems from a call from a parent of a student calling in. Access was provided by the parents list of violations is long but included broken glass in windows, non-operational windows, missing smoke detectors, insect infestation, and more. The condemnation was lifted when life safety issues were repaired, but additional repairs are still required.
- f. Property Maintenance staff are preparing for UD move-in. Inspectors will be going out to student housing areas to provide information about property maintenance codes and the expectations for the City of Newark. Property Maintenance and Fire Teams assisted UD with their annual Resident Advisor training on August 13.

Property Maintenance staff will be patrolling and responding to complaints throughout the weekend.

- g. EPL is moving into the final stages of the project with the following timeline:
 - i. Staff spent August 20-22 in training to test the processes that will be housed in Tyler Enterprise Permitting and Licensing (EPL) to reduce the possible issues in the process configurations prior to go live. Over the next two weeks, staff will work to resolve any issues found during testing in collaboration with the City's implementation consultant.
 - ii. September 11-13 – Train the trainer sessions for staff subject matter experts.
 - iii. October 1-3 – On-site go live for system.

Please expect delayed response times from staff during these windows as they work to get the launch of this new permitting and licensing software over the finish line.

- h. Code Enforcement vacancies in process include the following:
 - i. Interviews were held for the Administrative Professional I position that closed on July 31. Two applicants were interviewed on August 8. Nichol Scheld has been promoted to full time from part time effective August 19. The corresponding part time vacancy will be posted in the near future.
 - ii. The vacant [Property Maintenance Inspector](#) position has been posted and will be open for applications until August 30.

3. Parking

- a. Peak parking rates went into effect on August 16. During this time, on-street parking will be \$2.25/hour and off-street parking will be \$2.00/hour.
- b. Staff spent extensive time preparing options for Council for revenue enhancements and cost savings for the FY2025 budget discussion. This item will be on the August 19 Council agenda.
- c. Parking vacancies currently in process include the following:
 - i. The vacant evening Parking Coordinator position closed on August 15. Five candidates applied and all were interviewed on August 22. Staff expects to extend an offer by the first week of September.
 - ii. Part-time Parking Ambassadors Abrar Ahmed and Stephen Harper started on August 9.

Purchasing/Facilities Maintenance

- 1. **City Hall Flooding:** Facilities staff continues to make improvements to protect the Municipal Center from future flooding. Using ARPA funds approved by City Council Monday, sump pit repairs for the NPD and City Hall sump pits have been scheduled and flood barrier walls have been ordered.
- 2. **Bid Opportunities:** There are several bid opportunities currently, which can be found on the City's website:
 - a. RFP 24-01: Emergency Management Consultant Services – proposal deadline 8/27

- b. ITB 24-03: Newark Warehouse #2 Expansion – bid deadline 9/3
- c. ITB 24-06: 2024 ADA Transition Plan Improvements – bid deadline 9/10
- d. ITB 24-09: Fiber Network Expansion – bid deadline 9/10
- e. ITB 24-11: Edna C. Dickey Park Site Improvements – bid deadline 9/3

Police

1. **Community Engagement:** Police staff were very active this week on community engagement activity:
 - a. During the week of August 12th, the Community Engagement Unit assisted with the Parks & Rec Department Safe Kids Camp.
 - b. On August 15, 2024, Chief Farrall and D/Chief Feeney met with Dr. Williams and representatives from the Newark NAACP. Chief Farrall provided an update on recruitment and retention along with discussions on our new Community Engagement Unit, the Citizen's Police Academy, the Police Advisory Committee, and our School Resource Officer Program, along with current events in the community.
 - c. On August 20th, members of the Community Engagement Unit attended the Christiana Care Annual Blood Drive. In addition to giving blood during the event, officers provided information and demonstrations on impaired driving.
2. **Police Academy Graduation:** On Thursday, August 22nd, Mayor Clifton and City Manager Coleman joined the Newark PD command staff and officers at the Delaware State Police Academy graduation where Newark PD's two newest officers, Alexander Lozano and Chris Jones were recognized for completion of the six-month police academy. Officers Lozano and Jones will now begin the next phase of their training, a three-month field training program.
3. **Back to School:** On August 23rd, Newark PD will attend a Back-to-School Community Fair at the Hudson State Service Center.
4. **UD Move-In Weekend:** During the weekend, Newark PD will have additional officers on hand to assist with traffic issues related to the University of Delaware student move in weekend. Newark PD will also begin the fall crime suppression plan where high visibility patrols will be implemented in the business district and student rental areas to curtail criminal activity and quality of life concerns associated with the influx of students back to the City.
5. **Citizen's Police Academy :** Newark PD still has a few available spaces for the 16th Citizen's Police Academy program. The academy begins on Wednesday, September 11th and continues every Wednesday evening, 6-9pm, through November 20th. Interested persons can register for the program at [Citizens' Police Academy | Newark, DE - Official Website \(newarkde.gov\)](https://citizenspoliceacademynewarkde.org/)

Parks and Recreation

1. Capital Projects:

- a. Dickey Park construction bids due and scheduled to be opened Tuesday, 9/3
- b. Lumbrook and Fairfield Crest Park tennis courts resurfacing are completed. George Wilson Center basketball court is scheduled to begin Monday, 8/26
- c. George Read Construction: trail was staked out. Resident of Tyre Ave is upset with the plans and contacted the Mayor. She told me we are meeting Wednesday. Construction on hold?

2. Maintenance/Operations:

- a. We received 8 requests received for tree inspections. Tree contractor completed tree removal on Squirrel Lane, Odessa Way, Timber Creek and Timber Line.
- b. Storm damage to one of the footbridges at Redd Park has been identified and will be closed temporarily until additional repairs can be completed. Signage is posted and temporary trail cleared.
- c. Seasonal Parks Operations staff will be finished at the end of this week. Full time staff will then be needed to assist with mowing, trimming, landscaping, etc.
- d. Ballfield Maintenance is still a priority.

3. Events:

- a. Parks on Draft scheduled for August 23 at Handloff Park
- b. Community Day is scheduled Sunday, 9/15. We are up to about 125 vendors.

- 4. **New London Avenue School Museum at the GWC:** The grand opening for the New London Avenue School Museum is schedule for August 24th at the George Wilson Center from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

5. Recreation Programming:

- a. Conducted additional interviews for the Recreation Supervisor position
- b. Camp GWC concluded on 8/16. Specialty Camps held last week included Safe Kids Camp, Twisted Art Camp, Rittenhouse Rocks, Archery, Chess, Volleyball. This is our final week of summer camps with a few specialty camps concluding Friday, 8/23
- c. We are planning for the start of before/after school care on Tuesday, 9/3
- d. Pools closed for the season on Sat, 8/17 and have been covered. We will continue to run the pumps and plan for winterizing them as the weather gets cooler.
- e. Fall activity guide is live and resident registration has started. Non-resident registration begins Friday, 8/23.

6. Volunteers/Adopt a Park/Trail:

- a. A group of volunteers from Chemours completed cleaning of the Memorial Day monument on the Academy Building lawn on Friday, 8/16
- b. TD Bank had a crew of 10 volunteers mulching at Leroy Hill Park on Wed, 8/21

Finance and information Technology

1. **2024/2025 Tax Billing:** Property tax bills were mailed early last week. Bills are due in full by September 30th. Owners who pay by credit card will now pay a fee. We have also added the feature for tax bills to be paid by phone. Click on this link to pay your tax bill: [Real Estate Property Taxes \(munisselfservice.com\)](https://munisselfservice.com)
2. **SilverBlaze:** PUB and IT completed testing of the SilverBlaze platform, and results brought minimal issues that will not prevent the new utility customer service platform from going live on September 17.
3. **Increase utility collection efforts:** PUB and IT are working on an automation platform upgrade that targets utility accounts that are past due when they are finalized. Current practice sends closed electric accounts immediately to collections. New process will send a phone message to remind the account holder to pay their bill, and a second call will go out at 60 days later to give them a final chance to pay before we send them to collections. Intention is to collect 100% of what is due.
4. **2025 Budget:** Staff have been working with departments in preparation of their departmental budget presentations to Council which will begin on August 26th. On August 19th city manager Coleman and Director Del Grande presented the 2025 Overview. All budget material can be found on “Budget Central” when available. [Budget Central 2025 | Newark, DE - Official Website \(newarkde.gov\)](https://newarkde.gov/budget-central-2025)
5. **2026 Local Service Application:** Staff completed New Castle County’s 2026 Local Service Application and submitted it to New Castle County for consideration. This annual application provides the documentation required by state code that allows Newark taxpayers to pay a lower county tax rate since the city provides the same services (i.e. – police, parks, code enforcement). Each average resident receives about a \$376 annual discount on their County taxes due to this process due to being charged a lower tax rate.