



CITY OF NEWARK DELAWARE

Below is the weekly report for the week ending February 7, 2025.

Items for Newsletters:

1. **Folk Park Information Session:** A public information session to discuss a project proposed by Newark Charter School at Folk Memorial Park will take place on Wednesday, February 12, at 6:00 p.m. at the Aetna Banquet Hall located at 410 Ogletown Road. Officials from the City of Newark and Newark Charter School will provide background on the proposal and be available to address questions and concerns from the public.

Members of the community are encouraged to attend and share their thoughts on the proposed project. This is a valuable opportunity to voice support or opposition, express concerns, and ask questions directly to the officials involved.

2. **Bulk Refuse Collection Changes:** Staff have posted information on the City website and social media regarding the changes to the bulk refuse collection. Beginning on February 18, 2025, each household is entitled to two free pick-ups per calendar year. These complimentary services are for no more than four items per pickup and must be scheduled in advance. If a resident requires more than two pick-ups per calendar year, subsequent bulk collections will be subject to a \$20 fee. This additional service will continue to be limited to four items per pickup with additional charges for excessive size, weight, or numbers of items. To ensure timely service, all fees must be paid in full prior to scheduling any bulk collection above the complimentary service.
3. **Backyard Catch Basin and Storm Drain Inspections:** Stormwater crews continue inspections of catch basins and storm drains in the backyards of homes throughout Newark in early February. Notices will go out to any affected properties. Only inspections will be taking place at this time unless crews uncover a safety concern. Any repairs identified by the inspections will be completed at a later date and revised notices will go out ahead of any work. Please reach out to Public Works if there are any questions or concerns or to verify the crews identity.
4. **City newsletter:** To sign up for the City's email newsletter, [click here](#).

Public Works and Water Resources

1. **Winter Weather Feb 8th:** We are expecting another round of mixed precipitation similar to the storm event we experienced this Thursday. The current forecast is leaning toward primarily freezing rain and ice. Crews are out today pre-treating roadways throughout the city with a focus on Level 1 (primary roads). Crews will move into subdivisions as time allows with the expectation that we will have approximately 70% of city roads pretreated by this evening. The Saturday commute could be rather icy in some locations, and we are hopeful people stay off the roads and prepare for the Super Bowl Sunday. Another system is forecasted to move into the area Tuesday of next week with the potential to be an all-snow event with accumulations of 2-6". Public Works will continue to monitor the Tuesday storm as it gets closer in time and will staff the event accordingly. Residents and businesses are reminded that Public Works will call the end of the coming storms and sidewalks must be cleared or treated within 24 hours. Violations will be sent to property owners who fail to clear the sidewalks.

2. **Water Main Breaks:** The Water Division continues to address water main breaks throughout the system with several leaks identified and repaired along the Kirkwood Highway corridor. As of Thursday, Jan 7th we have experienced 27 main breaks since October 2024. Sustained cold weather, low water temperatures in the White Clay Creek, and the poor condition of our older mains in certain areas of the system all contribute to this increase in main breaks. Staff are actively working to prepare a contract for a conditions assessment of the water distribution system that will be phased over the next 2-3 years and will provide us with a snapshot of the structural integrity and life expectancy of the overall system. This will aid in identifying deficiencies and will help prioritize water main replacement over the next 10+ years.
3. **141 East Main Street Redevelopment Project – Construction to Begin:** PWWR engineering division along with other city staff conducted a pre-construction meeting for the mixed-use development project located at 141 East Main Street. The project consists of the previously approved five-story building fronting Haines Street with two commercial units, 52 apartments and associated parking. Construction of the building foundations and footers is scheduled to begin on or around February 17th. The first phase of the project will be isolated to the site interior with some utility improvements along Haines street that will require periodic sidewalk and lane closures. The project is anticipated to be completed in August of 2026.
4. **Delaware Avenue Fiber Installation (Nightwork Feb 10 – Feb 28):** A contractor for DelDOT will be installing fiber optic cables along Delaware Avenue beginning on or about February 10 and lasting approximately 3 weeks. This work will take place overnight and a noise waiver is in place for the work. Lane closures for vehicles and bicycles will be necessary for the duration of the project and flaggers and police will be present during the work. Please use caution and obey any traffic control signage or direction from personnel onsite.

Planning and Development

1. Land Use

- a. Planning Commission met on February 4 to review a presentation from staff on the [affordable housing outreach completed in 2024](#) and provided feedback on the policy items they would like to see move forward. This item has been scheduled for the March 17 Council meeting for their feedback. Once both groups have weighed in, staff will begin working on individual policy items to bring forward in 2025.
- b. The following Planning-related agenda items are on the agenda for the February 10 Council meeting:
 - i. [DART Connect update presentation](#)
 - ii. [Chapter 20 amendments to address towing fees permitted in the City of Newark](#) (first reading)
 - iii. [Chapter 32 amendments to allow body art establishments with a special use permit in the BB and BC zoning districts](#) (second reading)
 - iv. [Special use permit for an accessory use with impact for Boom Down Towing located at 1164 Elkton Road](#)
 - v. [Special use permit for a body art establishment for B13 Tattoos located at 170 East Main Street](#)
 - vi. [Minor subdivision to divide two lots into three and construct one additional single-family house at 261 and 263 South Chapel Street](#)
- c. Applicant presentations were completed for RFP No. 24-04 – Municipal Planning Services. The review committee completed their scoring and met for final vendor selection. This contract will be presented to Council at the February 24 meeting.

2. Code Enforcement

- a. The demolition permit for the existing restaurant building at 1115 South College Avenue (former Friendly's) was issued.
- b. Blue Crab Grill has passed their final building and fire inspections for their expansion in Suburban Plaza.
- c. The Property Maintenance team is resuming weekend patrols with the start of the new semester.

3. Parking

- a. As the development project at 141 East Main Street nears building permit approval, staff have begun to work with the property owner regarding the closing of Lot #7. Discussion has begun on a timetable for removing parking equipment once the permit is issued so construction can start in a timely manner and have a smooth transition. Staff anticipates this happening some time in the month of February.
- b. The free parking pilot for the winter off-season ended on Tuesday, January 21. Staff are working to get business owners to complete the survey distributed for feedback in order to bring an agenda item to Council in March to evaluate the pilot and make decisions about what Council would like to do for the summer off-season and moving forward. Only two businesses have responded thus far.
- c. Staff have been working with Path Communications and the FCC to resolve radio transmission issues. The repaired repeater was reinstalled at the reservoir; however, that did not solve the issues. Staff continue to work with the vendor for a solution.
- d. Reference checks for the vacant part-time Parking Ambassador positions are in progress and staff expect to make offers to successful candidates in the second week of February.

Parks and Recreation

1. Capital Projects:

- a. Dickey Park improvement – construction is on-going, progress meetings held monthly
- b. George Read Park improvements – construction delayed until February/March 2025, working on setting up pre-construction meeting to start back up
- c. Old Papermill Road Park – pre-construction meeting was held the end of January

2. Maintenance/Operations:

- a. Worked with Bill Johnson to get new motor installed for Dickey Park pool
- b. Scheduling ballfield and Rittenhouse Park inspections with Recreation Supervisor Nick Minnix in preparation for the start of Little League practices and camp
- c. Continuing to install new parking lot rule signs in park parking lots
- d. The park sign has been moved from along New London Road to the parking lot entrance as we await installation of an electronic sign along New London Road
- e. Working on presentation including Spring Tree Giveaway information for upcoming CAC meeting

3. Events:

- a. Upcoming events:
 - i. Folk Park Public Information Session on Newark Charter School request – February 12th, 6-8 PM at the Aetna Banquet Hall located at 410 Ogletown Road.
 - ii. Summer Camp and Program Fair – March 4 at Downes Elementary
- b. Employment and Volunteer Fair was held on Saturday, 2/1 at Newark Library. 9 vendors attended and approximately 75 people stopped in and participated. Outstanding volunteers from 2024 were recognized for their contributions.
- c. 2025 Sponsor and Vendor Packets are now available

4. Recreation Programming:

- a. We are excited to announce Katy Wheatley is scheduled to begin as our new Recreation Supervisor on Monday, 2/10/25!
- b. Staff are working to get summer camps planned and ready for the summer camp guide that comes out in March.
- c. Staff are finalizing the annual report and program statistics
- d. Recent and upcoming program highlights include Chess Club, Swim Lessons, Cocoa and Constellations at the Reservoir, Soccerroos, Youth Basketball, Youth Dance, Adult Fitness and more!
- e. Attended Downes Elementary PTA meeting to discuss upcoming programming and summer camps
- f. Before and After School Care at Downes and West Park
 - i. Starting to prepare for the annual licensing inspection at Downes in March.
 - ii. Revised method for billing and tracking monthly payments has been implemented and seems to be going well for both parents and office staff
 - iii. Courses available to staff to meet Office of Child Care Licensing requirements changed over the winter break and we are working to organize options and provide direction to staff for required trainings
- g. George Wilson Center
 - i. The park sign has been moved from along New London Road to the parking lot entrance as we await installation of an electronic sign along New London Road
 - ii. The panic button is set up at GWC and all attendants will be trained to use it
 - iii. For the week of 1/27, we had a no school day of play on 1/27, with 12 participants. We also had multiple other classes including stay fit, yoga, goju and ceramics. We also had events for 8 of our long term rentals, and 2 short term rentals.

5. Volunteers

- a. Continuing to receive registrations for summer camp volunteers and reaching out to them to set up phone interviews.
- b. Adopt a Park: Kells and Lewis Park- Andrew spent a total of 3 hours picking up yard debris and litter. He said there was much more trash this month than previous months.
- c. Volunteer slots for the Egg Hunt prep in April are staring to fill

Electric

1. CIP and L&G Plan Reviews:

- a. Completed our plan review and provided our comments to PWWR for the following projects:
- b. 50 & 54 Corbit (L&G Review)

2. Development Projects:

- a. 134 E. Main Street (Danneman): We finished terminating the secondary cable at the transformer and are already to energy the service.
- b. 1 N Twin Lakes: We completed all the electric infrastructure work for this project.

Finance

1. **Award** - The City's Annual Comprehensive Financial Report for 12/31/2023 was awarded the Government Finance Officers Association's (GFOA) Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. This is the fifteenth consecutive year the City has been recognized by the GFOA for excellence in financial reporting.
2. **New Utility Bills** – Staff are currently working on the final stages of revising the utility bills to make them easier to read. This was a component of the SSRS Bill Print Project approved by Council in 2024. <https://newarkde.gov/DocumentCenter/View/19013/3G> Anticipated roll out is in March.
3. **Customer Service Vacancy** – The Payment and Utility Billing team have been short one customer service representative (CSR) since mid-December. Interviews were conducted last week, and an applicant has been selected with an estimated start date of 2/24/2025.