



CITY OF NEWARK DELAWARE

Administrative Report

July 11th, 2025

Items for Newsletters

- 1. Main Street Pedestrian Safety Improvements:** Staff has been working with our consultant and DelDOT to complete the plans and specifications for upgrades to Main Street as discussed with Council in June. There seems to be some confusion regarding the traffic signal at East Main and Tyre Ave. Council voted to transition the signal to an All-Way Stop Condition and plans and specs have been developed to complete this conversion. During our discussions with DelDOT, their traffic studies group recommended we try an iterative plan to change signal timing and evaluate the effectiveness of the signal timing change against the desired effect of slowing traffic coming onto Main Street. Since this was a viable option and could happen while we work on the all way stop control conversion, we felt it was appropriate to try it out in the interim. I apologize if that was not clear from prior communications.

It remains our intention to convert this intersection to the all-way stop as directed by Council if the desired effect is not realized with the signal timing change. The change was not due to resident pushback as reported in the Newark Post and the conversion is still very much on the table to be implemented following an analysis of the signal changes. Council has given staff direction to move forward with this conversion; therefore Council would need to approve any plan that doesn't move forward with the conversion.

It is worth noting that there were several primary goals for the stop conversion (not exhaustive):

- Maintaining pedestrian/cyclist safety
- Setting the tone that Main Street is an urban setting and not a highway,
- Stopping traffic to break up speed as vehicles enter Main Street from higher speed roads
- Metering cars in a way to eliminate large gaps in traffic that would allow a vehicle to get up to high speed.
- Limiting impact on emergency vehicle response times

The signal change is unlikely to accomplish the second and fourth goals but may be slightly better on the fifth goal. Accordingly, temporary conversion to an all-way stop control is likely to still be the outcome of this effort so we can measure its effectiveness. If nothing else, we can compare the effectiveness of the stop control to the interim signal change configuration and baseline configuration. We plan to collect data and provide this to Council in the future as part of the signal removal process.

The current schedule has the signal timing/phasing changes planned to go into effect on August 1st. This date may slide depending on the weather. We plan to capture new speed data on Main Street for at least one week before and after the change goes into effect. Conversion to the all-way stop control will happen towards the end of August unless given direction otherwise by City Council.

- 2. Speed Cameras on Main Street:** The legislature approved the use of speed cameras on East Main Street as part of the epilogue language in this year's bond bill. The language specifically authorizes us to issue tickets starting as low as 6 mph above the speed limit. Before we can move forward with a speed camera in this location, City Council will need to officially approve the use of electronic speed enforcement equipment on East Main Street like what was done for the other 15 candidate streets.

Since all prior locations were using 11 miles per hour over the posted speed limit as the threshold for enforcement, Council will need to provide direction to staff on what threshold they would like to use for this location. We can go as low as 6 miles per hour above the speed limit but there may be a desire to maintain the same threshold as what will be used elsewhere for consistency, at least initially while we evaluate effectiveness. Lastly, Council will need to decide whether they want a permanent camera for Main Street or if they want to add it into the rotation with our other 15 streets. We currently have contracted for only one camera. This camera can move no more often than every other week so it would be in rotation no more often than every 32 weeks if not given higher weighting or additional cameras. The cameras cost around \$7000 per month via the State's authorized contractor, and we are allowed to use program revenues to cover the cost of the program, including cameras. Per State law, any additional revenue above the cost of our program would go to the State's Office of Highway Safety so the City can't use this as a revenue generator for normal operations.

3. **Speed Camera Schedule Update:** We recently signed the memorandum of understanding with DelDOT and have our local ordinance on the 7/14 council agenda for first reading and the 7/28 agenda for second reading and public hearing. Now that those hurdles are out of the way, we held an implementation kick-off meeting with the project vendor on Friday the 11th. At this meeting we discussed the remaining items necessary for implementation and settled on an anticipated go-live date with warnings at the Hillside Road location of October 13th, 2025. As with the Main Street camera, any additional revenue above the cost of our program would go to the State's Office of Highway Safety so the City can't use this as a revenue generator for normal operations.
4. **Indian River Reliability Must Run Update:** DEMEC successfully challenged the IR RMR tariff approved by PJM and as part of the settlement, Newark received a refund in the amount of \$1,030,741.64 this week. While only a partial refund of what we paid, the amount is significant and represents the hard work of the City and DEMEC leadership team in challenging the fee. Staff will place a discussion item on an upcoming Council agenda to get direction on what Council would like to do with this refund. Staff will be prepared with a recommendation.
5. **Municipal Street Aid - Reduction:** The City received the annual letter for Municipal Street Aid funds, which are funds provided by the state for municipalities to use for street rehabilitation. The amount has been reduced to roughly \$499,000 from \$535,000. This is a result of the recent Census figures that were skewed low in 2020 due to Covid. As a reminder, the census was completed in Newark just after the University sent everyone home due to the pandemic. As a result, our 2020 population is likely under counted by around 10%. Municipal street aid is distributed using a formula based on total population and road miles maintained by the municipality. Since our population decreased, so did the share of MSA funding provided to the City. Unfortunately, we will be stuck with the lower population figures for the next decade.
6. **Upcoming Events**
 - Parks on Draft – the second one of the summer is scheduled tonight, Friday, July 11 at Handloff Park from 5 - 8pm
7. **Free Parking:** Downtown parking will be free on Saturdays and Sundays from June 21 through August 10.



8. **City newsletter:** To sign up for the City's email newsletter, [click here](#).

Police

1. **Dispatch Center Savings Identified:** The police radio consoles in the 911 Center currently rely on a T1 line to communicate with the radio tower. In recent months, the cost of maintaining this T1 connection has increased significantly, with the City now incurring a monthly expense of \$6,450. In response, PSAP Manager Brian Cannon initiated a search for cost-effective alternatives, working in collaboration with Motorola, the Delaware Division of Communications, and IT Infrastructure Manager Donald Lynch. As a result of these efforts, Managers Cannon and Lynch successfully negotiated a five-year contract with Comcast to replace the T1 line with an Ethernet Private Line (EPL). A kickoff meeting with the assigned Comcast Project Manager is scheduled in the coming weeks. The estimated build-out period for the new connection is 45 to 60 days. Once implemented, the EPL will reduce the monthly cost to \$764.90, yielding a savings of approximately \$5,685 per month, or \$68,221 annually.

Public Works

1. **Tyre Avenue Closure:** Tyre Avenue will be closed between Delaware Avenue and Delaware Circle beginning Wednesday, 7/16 for sanitary sewer improvements. We anticipate having the planned work complete and road reopened know later than 3pm on Wednesday.
2. **Bulk Collections – 2025 Changes:** During preparations for the 2026 budget process, we did a preliminary analysis of the bulk collection changes put in place for 2025 to limit the number of bulk collections to two free collections per year. To date in 2025, we have seen a 25% reduction in bulk collections scheduled and have received very few complaints about the new policy. We expect this trend to continue for the rest of the year and will discuss in more detail during our budget hearings.

3. **Flooding Concerns:** Generally, Newark has been spared the worst of the downpours over the past few days, where points north of the City have received several inches of rain in the course of an hour. These events are a good reminder to remain safe and vigilant when these weather conditions exist. As much progress as we have made on localized drainage concerns and flooding within the City, large stream flooding remains a threat in the overall watershed within mapped flood zones.
4. **Chapel Street Clankers:** Following the success of the ‘Clankers’ at the Casho Mill Road Underpass, DelDOT is preparing a similar installation at the railroad bridge on North Chapel Street. This location remains one of the most struck bridges in the state. They expect to have a contract out for construction in September 2025.

Planning and Development

1. Land Use

- a. Planning Commission met on July 1 and considered the following items:
 - i. [Comprehensive Development Plan amendment, rezoning and major subdivision by site plan approval](#) to construct 13 additional townhouse-style apartments at the properties located at 55 and 67 West Cleveland Avenue and 46, 52, and 54 Church Street as Section II of the existing Cleveland Station development. The Comprehensive Development Plan amendment and rezoning were recommended for approval by a vote of 7-0 and the major subdivision by site plan approval was recommended for approval by a vote of 6-1.
 - ii. [Potential amendments](#) to Chapter, 32, Zoning, to create separate site plan approval criteria for redevelopment projects. Planning Commission provided feedback and this item will be brought back for additional discussion at a future meeting.
- b. The following Subdivision Advisory Committee comment letters were issued by staff this week:
 - i. Minor subdivision with special use permit located at 1050 South College Avenue to construct a ~5900 square foot convenience store with fly-through lane on July 8.
- c. The final submissions for the Community Development Block Grant year ending June 30 were completed and submitted to New Castle County. As CDBG is one of the items proposed to be eliminated in the federal budget, staff will be bringing an item to Council at the July 28 meeting to discuss how Council would like to move forward with the upcoming grant cycle. The Community Development/Revenue Sharing open house for organizations for the new grant cycle is scheduled for August 12.
- d. Staff has been working to move forward with various projects using the consulting budget provided by Council for 2025. Statuses for those items are as follows:
 - i. Rental and business license audit – project awarded to Verdantas on May 7. Internal data provided to vendor on June 30. Kickoff meeting held on July 8. Project in process.
 - ii. Comprehensive Development Plan 10-year review – project awarded to Rossi Group on July 8. Kickoff meeting scheduled for July 28. Plan for Planning and steering committee scheduled for review at August 5 Planning Commission meeting.
 - iii. Comprehensive fee review – project awarded to AECOM on July 8. Kickoff meeting to be scheduled.

2. Code Enforcement

- a. Property Maintenance is performing sweeps in neighborhoods receiving high concentrations of complaints. Notices are provided to all households letting them know that the neighborhood will be inspected at a future date and listing the violations that should be addressed prior to future inspections to avoid citations.
- b. Significant permits approved over the past two weeks include:
 - i. 46-54 Corbit Street (five townhouse-style apartments)
 - ii. 141 East Main Street (five-story mixed-use building)

3. Parking

- a. The City's free weekend parking promotion continues through Sunday, August 10.
- b. The Parking Advisory Committee agenda and packet were completed and distributed for their July 15 meeting. Topics on the agenda include an overview of the City's current parking technology, an overview of City parking signage, and a potential City parking survey.

Finance

1. **Audit/ Single Audit** – Annual Comprehensive Financial Report was submitted to the GFOA on June 27, 2025, and CLA will be at the August 11th Council meeting to present its results. Staff are now working on completing the Single Audit of Federal grant awards. This is due to the Federal Clearinghouse by September 30, 2025.
2. **Part Time Bookkeeper Vacancy** – Tanya Murray started on June 23, 2025, and is progressing in her training.
3. **Assistant IT Manager Vacancy** – This position closed on July 3 and applicants are currently being reviewed for interviews in the next few weeks.
4. **Budget** – We began internal meetings to discuss the departmental budgets this week and will finalize these meetings next week. Council meeting budget hearing dates have been scheduled with the City Secretary.
5. **GFOA Conference** – Director Hollander attended the Government Finance Officers Association's annual conference in Washington, DC June 29 thru July 2.

Facilities Maintenance:

- **Underground storage tanks:** The replacement of a 1,000-gallon diesel underground storage tank at the Municipal Center will be completed this week. Staff is investigating precise pricing for the replacement of the 5,000-gallon diesel and 10,000-gallon gasoline underground storage tanks at the Field Operations Complex in 2026. This will be the largest budget request from Facilities and is required by our insurance carrier to avoid loss of coverage or increased deductibles.
- **NPD Sallyport Slab Replacement:** Approval of ITB 25-03 will be before Council on 7/14. This project is a building and employee safety effort to replace the deteriorated slab supporting the sallyport (prisoner and evidence entry) as well as the motorcycle garage. Assuming approval on 7/14, the contractor will be issued a Notice to Proceed effective 8/1 with a completion deadline of 11/29.
- **Field Operations Complex Warehouse Expansion:** We are nearing completion of the warehouse expansion (approximately one month remaining). The roof and wall are now in place. See pictures below:



Electric

1. **SAC Requests:** Completed our review and provided our comments to Planning for the following SAC requests:
 - a. 0 Milford Run
 - b. 87 S. Chapel
2. **CIP and L&G Plan Reviews:** Completed our plan review and provided our comments to PWWR for the following projects:
 - a. SABRE at STAR Campus
 - b. 55 Benney St
 - c. 400 Leahy Drive
 - d. 52 E Mill Station Rd.
3. **Development Projects:**
 - a. 302 Markus Court - Pulling primary underground cable and setting two transformers
 - b. The Grove
 - i. Building C - Completed all electric infrastructure work
 - ii. Old K-Mart Building - Relocated the existing transformer and installed a new transformer
 - c. BPG at STAR - Had a meeting with the contractor to get pricing for directional bore across South College Road.
4. **Capital Improvement Projects:**
 - a. OMS Update: The latest version of the OMS has been installed on all servers. This update addresses bugs related to the mobile crew and the outage portal.
 - b. Outage Portal: The portal is now fully operational, allowing users to report outages, and the website performance has improved significantly.
 - c. IVR Scope of Work: We have clarified the scope of work for the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system, which will send calls to the on-call crew. A change order will be submitted pending their proposal.
 - d. Mobile Crew & Outages: We resolved issues with outages not appearing correctly in the mobile crew system, and outage cases will now automatically verify. We now need IT to complete the SQL server updates so we can conduct testing.
 - e. TextPower Notifications: After collaborating with IT and Survalent to adjust proxy server settings, TextPower notifications function correctly. We have one remaining item to address. Currently, when you send the message "OUT" from your cell phone to report a power outage, you will not receive a confirmation response. We are working with Survalent to implement a new feature that provides a confirmation text once an outage is reported.
 - f. Call Handler Bug: Right now, when we create an outage call using the call handler, it does not associate the address with the transformers/feeders. This issue was not fixed in the latest release, but it is expected to be resolved in the next one.
 - g. Maps: Bing Maps has stopped functioning. We need to switch to Google Maps or Open Street Maps for the mobile crew, call handler, and outage portal.
5. **Other Items:**
 - a. 346 Danna Lane - We have a faulty underground cable serving 346 Danna Lane. They are currently on service saver. We are scheduled to replace the damaged cable on Tuesday, July 15.
 - b. 300 E. Main St (New Ark United Church of Christ) - We met with the consultant to discuss relocating 350 feet of aerial power lines on the east side of the property at 300 E. Main St (New Ark United Church of Christ).
 - c. East Main Street Powerlines - We met with the consultant to discuss relocating/burying 1,328 feet of aerial power lines along E. Main Street from 45 E. Main Street to 17 W. Main Street.