



MEMORANDUM

Date: February 20, 2024

To: Timothy P. McInerney, Town Administrator

From: Scott D. Charpentier, P.E., Public Works Director

Subject: **Public Works Project Updates**

The support of our Boards and Committees has led to the funding of numerous Capital Improvements Projects. The Department of Public Works has managed these critical projects through various stages of completion this past fiscal year. In addition to these projects and our daily operational tasks, the DPW purchased and is in the process of commissioning replacement equipment and vehicles including a water/sewer dump truck, and two Highway Division vehicles, small and large dump trucks. Beyond the capital program, the DPW has managed several other projects that are funded through a variety of other means.

I would like to take this opportunity to update you on the status of our department's project activities.

- **Pavement Management**

The Town's initial pavement management plan inventory and assessment was completed in 2013 which measured an average Town-wide Pavement Condition Index (PCI) of 71. In FY2015 the Legislature authorized a \$300 million Chapter 90 program; however, subsequent years' funding levels have been reduced to \$200 million. Annual spending of \$1.1 million is necessary to maintain or slightly improve our current pavement conditions. Under that standard, the Town's Annual Chapter 90 allocation of approximately \$500,000 plus a local appropriation of \$300,000 results in a \$300,000 funding gap, which would be filled if the statewide Chapter 90 funding were released at \$300 million. In the meantime, Annual Town Meetings (ATM) have funded the additional \$300,000 needed to fill this funding gap through the capital improvement plan utilizing free cash.

Our most recent update to the pavement management PCI, which incorporates work completed in 2023 shows the town-wide PCI improved from 71 in 2014 to 76 in 2023. Below is a summary of pavement management work the Town completed in the 2023 construction season. This represents approximately 11% of all roadways in town having received some form of maintenance activity.

2023 Pavement Program Summary		
	<u>Length</u>	<u>Length</u>
	(Feet)	(Mile)
Reclamation	4,435	0.8
Mill and Overlay	1,310	0.2
Rubber Chip Seal	11,080	2.1
Surface Rejuvenation	14,940	2.8
Crack Fill	14,800	2.8
		8.8
Sidewalks	2,540	0.5

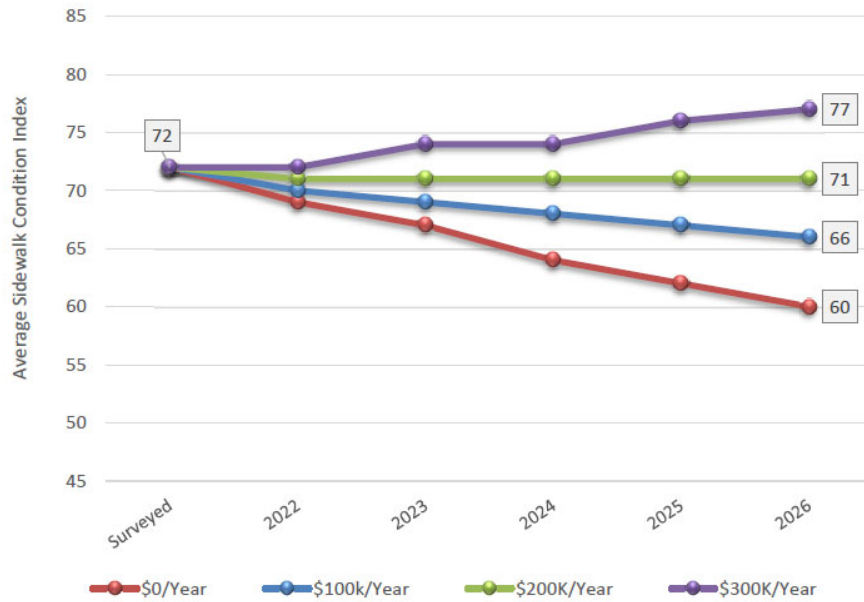
- *Status: The Town prepared a comprehensive 3-year roadway improvement plan to follow the program goals of maintaining or improving our overall roadway rating, implementing a range of treatments in a regionalized approach, and applying annual treatments to at least 10% of our roadways. The chart below shows the different funding level impacts on the overall PCI and assumes the \$1.1M investment isn't diverted to other critical needs including drainage repairs.*

- **Sidewalk Improvements and Construction**

The recently completed Northborough Master Plan identifies sidewalk and crosswalk improvements as well as sidewalk expansion as primary goals of the community. Public Works has begun working towards these goals in several ways.

- *Status: Reconstruction of Thoreau Road and Emerson Road in 2023 included replacement of all sidewalks and cement concrete wheelchair ramps.*

A complete reassessment of all town sidewalks was conducted in 2022 which culminated with a sidewalk management plan and accompanying capital improvement plan. Unfortunately, the assessment identified approximately \$2.1 million in existing sidewalk repairs needed. Without an identified funding source, this cost will continue to rise. The chart below presents different funding scenarios and the associated systemwide impact.



- Complete Streets**

Northborough applied to become a Complete Streets Community and was awarded \$35,200 in State grant funds to assist with development of a Townwide Prioritization Plan. The plan was completed and approved by the State in early 2023.



- **Status:** The Town is now eligible for construction funding grants of up to \$500,000 over the next five years. The expectation is that the Planning Department will allocate some or all funds toward improving accessibility in and around downtown.

- **Water and Sewer SCADA Project**

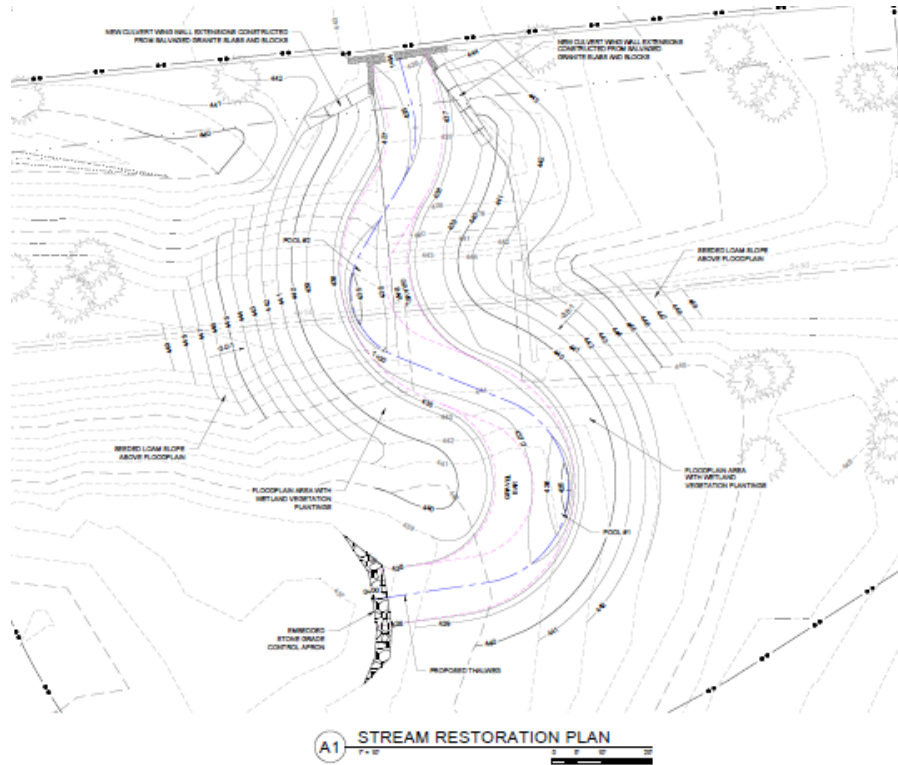
The 2021 ATM approved funding for the Town's first Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition system for the water and sewer divisions. This allows operating staff to monitor and adjust control of critical water and sewer infrastructure remotely through a secure dedicated network. This first phase of implementation includes two control stations as well as five monitoring locations.

- *Status: Operational software customization is complete. Installation of site-specific control panels continues. The system is currently being testing and is expected to be online by the end of the fiscal year.*

A Federal earmark was included and approved as part of the recently signed omnibus bill. This awards the Town \$491,000 for implementation of the final phase of SCADA. This funds 80% of the total costs with the remainder to be appropriated from water and sewer free cash at the 2023 Annual Town Meeting.

- **Northborough Reservoir Dam Removal**

The Northborough Water Division owns a dam located in Shrewsbury and Boylston, which no longer provides a useful function for the Town. The Massachusetts Office of Dam Safety found the dam to be in poor condition and has ordered its repair or removal. A recent study concluded that removal is the most cost-effective and environmentally conscious alternative. The 2021 ATM approved funding the design and permitting phase of removal in the amount of \$50,000, combined with an additional \$168,750 competitive grant awarded through the Commonwealth. The State approved supplemental funds for permitting services in the amount of \$72,800.



- **Status:** State environmental permit applications have been submitted and are awaiting action. The next step will be local permitting and final dam permitting. Once the design and permitting phase is complete, the Town intends to seek grant funding through the State Dam and Seawall Grant Program as well as the Municipal Vulnerability Program to help fund the cost of removal.

- **Dog Park**

Adding a dog park to Northborough’s recreational facilities was identified as a priority both in the Master Plan as well as in the Open Space Plan. Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding in the amount of \$35,500 was allocated to preliminary design. A CPA appropriation of \$347,500 was appropriated toward the final design and construction.



- *Status: A grant application for approximately \$225,000 was submitted to the Stanton Foundation for their consideration of construction funding. This will be combined with the remaining CPA appropriation to enter the construction phase of the project later this year.*

- **Brigham Street Burial Ground Beautification**

Northborough owns a pre-revolutionary war era burial ground on Brigham Street near the South Street end. The Northborough Historic District Commission installed interpretive signage in 2021 to bring public awareness to these grounds. \$137,500 of CPA funds were allocated at the 2022 ATM to remove dead and dying trees, loam and seed the impacted areas, and install a post and chain border.

- *Status: The project is substantially complete with a second seeding needed in the spring. Tree disease and mortality was found to be extensive, specifically with drought affected oaks, and impaired hemlock stock.*

- **Senior Center Accessible Trail**

The need for an accessible trail was identified in the Town's Master Plan as well as the Open Space Plan. The Town prepared a conceptual design in 2020 and submitted an unsuccessful grant application to the State. \$28,500 of funding was approved at the 2022 ATM which supports design permitting services, and \$370,000 was approved at the 2023 ATM to fund construction.

- *Status: The project construction contract has been awarded and work is expected to begin as soon as the weather allows.*