



CITY OF NEW BEDFORD
JONATHAN F. MITCHELL, MAYOR

March 18, 2021

City Council President Joseph P. Lopes, and
Honorable Members of the City Council
133 William Street
New Bedford, MA 02740

Dear Council President Lopes and Honorable Members of the City Council:

I am submitting for your consideration three bond allocations which will constitute this year's round of projects for the FY 2021-2025 Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Much like previous capital funding rounds, these projects are intended to continue essential renovation and repair efforts while also designating local funding to supplement state aid for much-needed road and sidewalk repairs.

The capital program was initiated in FY 2014 as a roadmap for the City's long-range capital needs, and the City Council has approved rounds of projects included in the plan on an annual basis. The CIP has guided the City in financing much-needed renovations to the City's schools, libraries, public safety facilities, senior centers, City Hall, the Hillman Street complex, Buttonwood Park Zoo, the Zeiterion Theatre and the Art Museum. In addition, the CIP was instrumental in prioritizing limited resources to make the new Taylor and Jacobs schools, development of the South Public Safety Center, and long-needed repairs at several of the City's elementary schools, possible.

Our utilization of a five-year CIP has also been a key component in our efforts to demonstrate responsible fiscal management to rating agencies and investors, and was cited as a factor in our achieving a AA- bond rating in 2014, as well as the recent rating from Standard & Poor's, which affirmed the City's AA- status. The CFO updates the CIP annually in light of funding opportunities and input from other department heads.

The CIP totals \$120.7 million from FY 2021 through 2025. Of this amount, \$18.2 million would be allocated for capital asset preservation projects for public safety, road repairs, public use buildings and other government facilities, and approximately \$11.3 million would be allocated for ongoing replacement of capital vehicles and general fleet replenishment. \$31.4 million would be allocated for major renovations and/or replacements at general government facilities, while \$59.8 million would be allocated for school projects. The CIP will be funded by a combination of general obligation debt and lease purchases. The program is designed to work within the City's existing debt profile as much as possible, thereby minimizing the impact on ongoing debt service requirements.

IN CITY COUNCIL, March 25, 2021

Referred to the Committee on Finance – Yeas 11, Nays 0.

Dennis W. Farias, City Clerk

A true copy, attest:

City Clerk

Accompanying the CIP are three loan orders intended to finance the City's capital needs for FY 2021. The FY 2021 capital improvement bond increases the annual commitment to roads and infrastructure and restores projects which were eliminated from last year's initial proposal in response to the pandemic. In addition, I am submitting a loan order to finance renovations to the City's fleet management facility, whose design was initially funded through a Free Cash allocation in 2019. Finally, this year's package also includes a multiyear proposal to improve water quality at Sassaquin Pond. It is worth noting that we are fortunate that the introduction of this combination of badly needed projects is ready for submission during the current period of historically low interest rates.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal, and I look forward to the discussion ahead.

Sincerely,

Jon Mitchell
Mayor





Department of Public Infrastructure

Jamie Ponte
Commissioner

Water
Wastewater
Highways
Engineering
Cemeteries
Park Maintenance
Forestry
Energy

CITY OF NEW BEDFORD

Jonathan F. Mitchell, Mayor

March 15, 2021

Mr. Ari Sky
Chief Financial Officer
City of New Bedford
133 William Street
New Bedford, MA 02740

Subject: FY 2022 Capital Needs Assessment
Sassaquin Pond Water Quality Improvements Project

Dear Mr. Sky:

Sassaquin Pond is a classic New England kettlehole pond located in northern New Bedford in a primarily residential neighborhood. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has designated Sassaquin Pond to be a Great Pond, held in trust by the Commonwealth for the benefit of the public. Great Ponds are defined by the Commonwealth as any pond or lake that is more than 10 acres in its natural state and are required to be maintained for public recreational access.

The City of New Bedford (City) has been working to improve the water quality in Sassaquin Pond since the 1970s in response to water quality degradation that has occurred. Early actions taken by the City have included:

- Banning of gasoline motors.
- Developing a storm sewer system to reduce flooding potential in the watershed and its surrounding neighborhoods, and
- Connecting properties to the sanitary sewer system in 1974 and 1975, reducing nutrient and bacteria loads to the pond.

While these actions notably improved water quality, degrading water quality still occurred in Sassaquin Pond. This led to a lawsuit by area residents against the City (Pothlier *et al.* vs. the City of New Bedford *et al.*, 1987). In response to this lawsuit, the City was required to conduct a water quality monitoring program and bathymetric survey (completed in the late 1980s - early 1990s) and maintain the water quality in the pond at Class B standards.

Since the settlement, the City has implemented additional water quality improvements within the watershed, including a frequent street sweeping program, public education, and structural BMPs such as a Jellyfish® water quality treatment system, tree boxes, and stormwater leaching pits. Even with these improvements however, water quality issues in the pond still persist as observed in the algal bloom that occurred in summer 2020.

Due to the years of planning, implementation and lack of improvement to water quality in the pond, in 2020, DPI determined that it was time to refocus and reprioritize the City's approach to improving water quality in the pond. Two studies that were completed in previous years provided good information; however, lacked the cohesive approach and strategy that DPI felt was needed to address the impairments.

In March, 2020, DPI contracted with a consultant to develop a new strategy (herein referred to as the "2020 Assessment") with the goal of determining short term actions, mid-range cost effective improvements, and longer term larger scale projects in a prioritized manner so that the City could focus its limited funding on higher "bang for the buck" work first while addressing funding and project implementation needs for larger scale projects. This approach was vetted with the Sassaquin Pond Betterment Association and has garnered support.

The new strategy started in March 2020 is currently in draft form; however, the approach to project implementation and the initial project scopes of work have been established. The purpose of this letter is to formally request the Fiscal Year 2022 Capital Needs Assessment (CNA) process, funding for implementation of Phase I of the Sassaquin Pond water quality improvements projects as outlined in the draft 2020 Assessment.

To continue improving water quality in the pond, CDM Smith has worked closely with the City's department of Public Infrastructure to develop a work plan guiding capital and operations and maintenance (O&M) actions. The funding from this CNA ask will complete the following projects:

- Construction of green infrastructure in selected areas to address inflows to and from adjacent storm drains and impervious areas.
- Enhanced inspections and O&M practices related to street sweeping and catch basin cleaning.
- Permitting and implementation of an alum treatment to address phosphorous impairments.
- Permitting and implementation of invasive species removal.
- Planning phase assessment for stormwater system diversion.
- Watershed impervious area removal and restoration.
- Existing BMP enhancement and maintenance.
- Addressing floatables currently being discharged to the pond.
- Water quality monitoring, outfall sampling, and coordinated watershed based plan development for acquiring additional state funding through the 319 non point source program.
- Public education and outreach
- Outfall improvements
- Assessment of and initial permitting for pond dredging to remove phosphorous laden sediments and potentially restore groundwater pond inflows.

The total ask over the life of the program could range between \$8.4M and \$14.8M depending on the scope of larger scale projects and pond dredging needs; however, the DPI intends to implement the above recommendations in a phased approach allowing for monitoring and an adaptive management strategy depending on the overall effectiveness of projects.

Mr. Ari Sky
FY 2022 Sassaquin Pond Improvements CNA Projects
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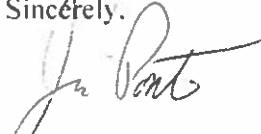
As such, the following summarizes the next four fiscal year's asks:

FY 2022 - \$100,000
FY 2023 - \$400,000
FY 2024 - \$500,000
FY 2025 - \$500,000

Depending on the effectiveness of projects, grants that may be applied for, and cash flow to implement larger scale projects, DPI may request that certain fiscal year asks are combined to maximize funding availability.

We appreciate the opportunity to continue to work with you to provide the needed funding for implementing projects that will have a direct impact on an important resource for the City. If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact me at (508) 979-1550.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jamie Ponte", with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Jamie Ponte
Commissioner

Cc: Shawn T. Syde, City Engineer
Manuel Silva, Deputy Commissioner
Adam Hart, Project Manager
Sharon Thomas, Management Analyst
Rebecca Gomes, DPI Administration