



City of New Bedford
Jonathan F. Mitchell, Mayor

City of New Bedford
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Date: November 12, 2014
For Immediate Release

P R E S S R E L E A S E

Mayor Mitchell Outlines Five-Year Plan to Address City's Facilities and Equipment Needs

New Bedford, Massachusetts –At a press briefing earlier today against the backdrop of a scaffold-clad City Hall, Mayor Jon Mitchell and several department heads outlined the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The CIP is a long-term plan for addressing the facility and equipment needs of the City of New Bedford, first introduced in 2013 and updated this year through 2019. The updated CIP includes a proposal for a Fall 2014 bond, which would continue restoration efforts that were initiated over the past year and fund pressing improvement needs at public safety buildings, school department facilities, facilities designed for public use and at those designed to house general government operations.

“Our updated capital plan continues the efforts we began last year to address long unmet facility and equipment needs. While we have seen real progress resulting from last year's bond, it is important that we continue our momentum and address these essential needs. Over time, the implementation of the CIP will result in a City that is properly maintained and serves its residents more effectively,” said Mayor Jon Mitchell.

The first bond issued under the capital plan was funded in late 2013. The \$5.8 million allocation was targeted toward critical needs throughout the City and has resulted in repairs to police and fire stations, renovations to the Casa de Saudade Library and the Zeiterion Theatre, repairs to the City Hall façade and renovations to the Fort Tabor Military Museum. In addition, the initial bond initiated renovations to the Hillman Street complex and improvements to the Buttonwood Park Zoo.

“This year's update to the capital plan focuses on continuing the progress that we have made in funding renovations over the past year. The CIP allows us to develop a program that addresses the City's core facilities and major equipment needs while restraining the impact on overall debt,” said City Chief Financial Officer Ari Sky.

The program is designed ensure that the highest priority projects receive public funding in a manner that is in keeping with the City's ability to pay. The total budget for

the five-year plan is \$50.4 million and the Mayor has already submitted a \$5.9 million Fall 2014 bond request to the City Council to continue the progress that has been initiated over the past year.

The FY2015-2019 Capital Improvement Plan contains a complete listing of the highest priority capital improvement projects and their descriptions.

Highlights of the Capital Improvement Plan

- The first step in creating the Plan was the development of a Capital Needs Assessment (CNA) by the City's Chief Financial Officer, Ari Sky, which identified roughly \$66 million in needs across all City departments.
- The CIP provides a plan to address current and projected renovation, restoration and major equipment replacement needs. The plan was first introduced in 2013, with the initial version extending through 2018.
- Under the CIP, the City will pursue \$50.4 million in projects over the next five years. The plan is updated with new projects annually, with much of the focus on repairs and deferred maintenance.
- Top funding priorities under the CIP are:
 - Roof replacements for the Zeiterion Theatre, the Pleasant Street police station, and the New Bedford Art Museum to eliminate water infiltration and prevent continued deterioration of the buildings' interiors.
 - \$4.6 million for police, fire, and EMS equipment and vehicles.
 - \$16.1 million for the local share of three new school projects (Hannigan, Taylor, and another school to be determined).
 - \$1 million for continued repairs to the Hillman Street Complex, making the facility suitable for future consolidation of City services.

In addition, the CIP includes funding to continue restoration of the City Hall façade, improvements to the Buttonwood Park Zoo, and to repair and replace City athletic fields.

- Affordability was the most important factor in developing the CIP. The plan was designed with the objective of restraining long-term financing costs by maintaining overall debt at its current levels over the course of the five-year planning period.

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