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Catching Up with Cuyahoga Heights

Keep informed about ongoing and upcoming village-wide projects
with Mayor Bacci

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I trust that you are enjoying a happy and healthy 2024 and looking forward to the spring season as everything starts to turn green. Just like every year, the village has several important capital projects that have continued to move forward since we last updated our residents, and are in various stages of either planning, construction or on hold—waiting for other stakeholders to complete their work scope so we can proceed. As always, you will no doubt continue to see these projects “in action” as you drive around town this year. Many of these projects are years in the making. They are the result of good planning, proper coordination with stakeholders, creative thinking, and coordination from our village senior staff, council, and administration. My purpose in writing now is to give you an understanding of the many exciting activities happening around town, and an update as to the status of the design, planning and/or construction of those projects.

ROADWORK & ADJACENT INFRASTRUCTURES

East 71st Street Slope Failure

The Cleveland Water Department (CWD) showed up (finally) and repaired the transmission line that has been leaking for over five years. As discussed in the past, these leak(s) have contributed to the failure of the East 71st Street hill and pavement. On February 22 we received notice that CWD and their contractors would begin mobilization to start the repair of the next leak that has been identified along the 30” CWD transmission watermain, just south of Willowbrook Drive. The investigative work will be used to determine the extent of the break and identify what parts are needed for the repair. There could be delays where no work is taking place while supplies are being procured. As you have seen, work has taken place Monday through Sunday as necessary, between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. with the use of flaggers for the work zone.

Our village has continued to monitor the movement of the East 71st Street slope through instrumentation that has been set by the geotechnical engineer. The last readings were taken in the fourth quarter of 2023, and there are still small movements within the underlying soils, and the slope has continued to creep.

Upon CWD completing the repairs in totality, the village will develop the construction drawings for the repair of the pavement, the retaining wall to stabilize the failed slope, and the securing and protection of the existing utilities—along with continuing to work with the stakeholders at the Federal, State and Local levels to secure funding sources to stabilize and fully reconstruct this pavement.

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East 71st Street Crossover

This project continues to be “on the books,” but in a holding pattern. Sadly, we cannot move forward towards completion in any meaningful way until CWD locates and stops all transmission main leaks that have existed for quite some time. Put simply, we cannot responsibly spend your money to complete the project until we know the ground underneath the crossover is no longer compromised by the CWD leaks. Our engineering and legal teams have been working with CWD and have made some progress.

Willowbrook Cul-de-sac

The balance of the Willowbrook cul-de-sac will be under construction commencing on or around the first week of June and will be completed ahead of Cuyahoga Heights schools starting back up in August of 2024. This work will include new aprons, catch basins, storm sewer, and sidewalks after the balance of the pavement is completed. This will have a minimal impact on the Willowbrook Drive residents—outside of the residents living on the cul-de-sac.

East 72nd Place/Bletch & Marcelline Courts Pavement Reconstruction

Village council has committed to the full reconstruction of East 72nd Place and Bletch and Marcelline Courts along with evaluating the potential to upgrade trunk gravity utilities and service connections within the village right-of-way. This project has been in the queue for years and we are continuing to pursue funding through the 2024/2025 season. We anticipate being under construction for a full pavement reconstruction from sidewalk to sidewalk starting in the 2025 season and stretching into 2026. This project will be a great improvement to the area but will be very difficult as it relates to residential accessibility and adjacent parking. More to come on this as the project funding and sequencing unfolds, but it is very exciting to see long, overdue attention to this area.

Grant Avenue Repaving Project

★**PLEASE READ...***this one is going to cause some headaches although this project is long overdue, and it will ultimately test the East 71st Street residents and businesses patience.*

To that...the Village of Cuyahoga Heights and Cuyahoga County have continued to pursue funding to make this project a success. We have been notified that the project will commence in July of 2024 with **ONE-WAY** traffic being implemented both east and west away from I-77. Future correspondence will be forthcoming from our office as we are updated with information on the project. This undertaking will mostly be funded by outside sources and is a credit to how hard our administration works toward protecting our village coffers. The project is estimated to be substantially complete in the early winter of 2024 with final clean up and restoration in the spring of 2025. Once complete, this curb-to-curb repaving will have Grant Avenue in excellent condition for the next 12-15 years.

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I-77 Project

ODOT's upcoming project is slated for 2025 which will replace the pavement and widen shoulders on I-77 from the Canal Road overpass to I-490 and will cost \$86 million. This is a 5-year project which includes the following improvements:

- Reconstructing the I-77 and ramp pavements, drainage system, lighting, and signing.
- Widening the I-77 median shoulders.
- Building retaining walls.
- Replacing the right-of-way fencing along the entire corridor.
- Building a pedestrian underpass and extending Morgana Run Trail under I-77.
- Building the Slavic Village Downtown Connector Trail from East 48th Street to Pershing Avenue.

ODOT/CSX Railroad Bridge Over I-77

ODOT in conjunction with CSX will be replacing the railroad bridge over I-77 located south of Grant Avenue. This new structure will no longer require a center pier and will make way for the I-77 reconstruction project from Brecksville Road to Broadway Avenue which is to commence in 2024-2028. The project consists of the removal of the existing bridge, drilled shaft foundations and new beam erections. The CSX bridge replacement is set to commence in June of 2024 and be completed by October of 2026.

NEORSD Southerly Tunnel Dewatering Pump Station Electrical Service Project

Beginning in March and around the area of NEORSD's Environmental & Maintenance Services Center (EMSC) located at 4747 East 49th Street, the following project will commence and include the noted improvements:

- Provide electrical power service from the Southerly WWTC to the Southerly Tunnel Dewatering Pump Station site and Southerly Tunnel and Consolidation project site.
- New buried duct banks, manholes, handholes.
- New 15 kV medium voltage cables.
- Installation of two (2) – 20-inch steel casing pipes by the jack-and-bore method under East 49th Street to facilitate installation of the electrical ducts and cabling under the roadway.



The contractor will establish a laydown area on site. As a constraint to this project, all construction traffic is required to travel south along East 49th Street. Construction traffic travel north on East 49th Street past the railroad overpass will be prohibited. Normal work hours are restricted to the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, and typical work hours are 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. There will be no weekend work hours without special approval. All work regarding the project occurring at the EMSC site should be completed by June 1, 2024. This work is being performed for NEORSD by DRS Enterprises, Inc.

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NEORSD Southerly Tunnel Work

In April 2024, NEORSD will start construction on the Southerly Tunnel & Consolidation Project, and in 2027 the construction of the Southerly Pump Station Project will be underway in Cuyahoga Heights. These two projects are part of Project Clean Lake, the Sewer District's program to protect Lake Erie, the Cuyahoga River, and other waterbodies by reducing the volume of combined sewage overflowing into the environment during heavy rain events. The tunnel is scheduled to be completed in late 2027, and the pump station construction will end in late 2029. The main tunnel construction site will be in an open lot located at 4700 East 49th Street which is across the street from the Sewer District's Environmental & Maintenance Services Center. This site will be the permanent home of the pump station as well. Construction impacts may include:

- **Noise:** There will be typical construction noise levels near the construction site.
- **Traffic impacts:** On occasion, it may be necessary to block traffic, so that large equipment can be delivered to the construction site. This is to ensure the safety of residents.
- **Dust, Dirt, Mud, and Debris:** There will be typical construction dust, dirt, mud, and debris near the construction site. The Sewer District's construction contractor will be required to sweep East 49th Street.
- **Extended Work Hours:** There may be periods of time where construction will be required beyond the typical 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. work hours. However, trucking to and from the site will be limited during the extended work hours.

Bletch Court – East 72nd Place – Marcelline Court Housing Redevelopment

The village is moving forward with a lot fit study and has secured a proposed new home package that would be the concept for the first phase of the housing redevelopment along the courts. The homes previously located at 7133 and 7137 Marcelline Court have been razed, the new home architectural drawings have been purchased, and will soon be available for developers/builders to be able to construct a new home matching the design criteria outlined in the redevelopment plan for owner occupied residents.

Toscana Hall

If you haven't heard, the village purchased the property from the FOP with an abundance of caution, due to the fact that this commercial property is nestled in our residential area and usage could have a direct impact on adjacent neighbors. You will see improvements happening to the facility over the next 6 months while our administration brings exciting and fresh new ideas to this facility while moving forward, and keeping the residents in this area in mind, first and foremost.

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Redevelopment of 901 Harvard Avenue

The village purchased the property out of tax foreclosure in 2022. Our service department has been working to address some legacy issues found on the inside and outside of the property. We are making repairs and improvements to the site and will likely be taking additional steps to get the property ready for productive use soon.

Benjamin Moore Site Redevelopment

The former Benjamin Moore site is taking shape, the buildings have been raised and the retaining wall that fortifies East 71st Street is in place. The trees and fencing have been installed along with irrigation. The site will continue to be marketed for future redevelopment by the right developer and has greatly enhanced the Grant Avenue/East 71st Street entranceway.

Hillside Redevelopment

The village has been working with a developer to actively market the site. Indeed, a very successful end-user was planning to purchase the site and construct a large building on the property in the end of 2022, but before making a financial decision to retrofit into an existing building, rather than construct a new building on the Hillside site. This was a bit of a let-down, as the developer and the end-user were both very excited over the property and the project. Sadly, material costs and the availability of an existing structure for a much cheaper price was too great to overcome and our end-user opted to select a more cost-effective site in another location.

The developer is actively marketing the site to new end-users and intends to construct a building to suit the end-users' needs along with the village's requirements for a well-planned, aesthetically pleasing building. While the site is being marketed, the village will be doing some earthmoving activities around the site to make the property more attractive to the next end-user. One of the lessons we learned from our last developer is the competition for shovel-ready sites is fierce, particularly while new construction projects are more costly than renovations on existing buildings. Our additional site preparation will give us an edge against other sites competing for new construction, and as the market turns towards new buildings, we will be well-positioned to pick the "**right**" end-user for the site.

Harvard Refuse Landfill

The village continues to monitor the court case between the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency and the receiver to ensure that any "global solutions" to the future of the landfill are achieved with the village's input and leadership. Most of the interested stakeholders (Ohio EPA, Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District, Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, and the City of Garfield Heights) share this vision and are working cooperatively with our team to ensure the site is safely and productively managed in the future.

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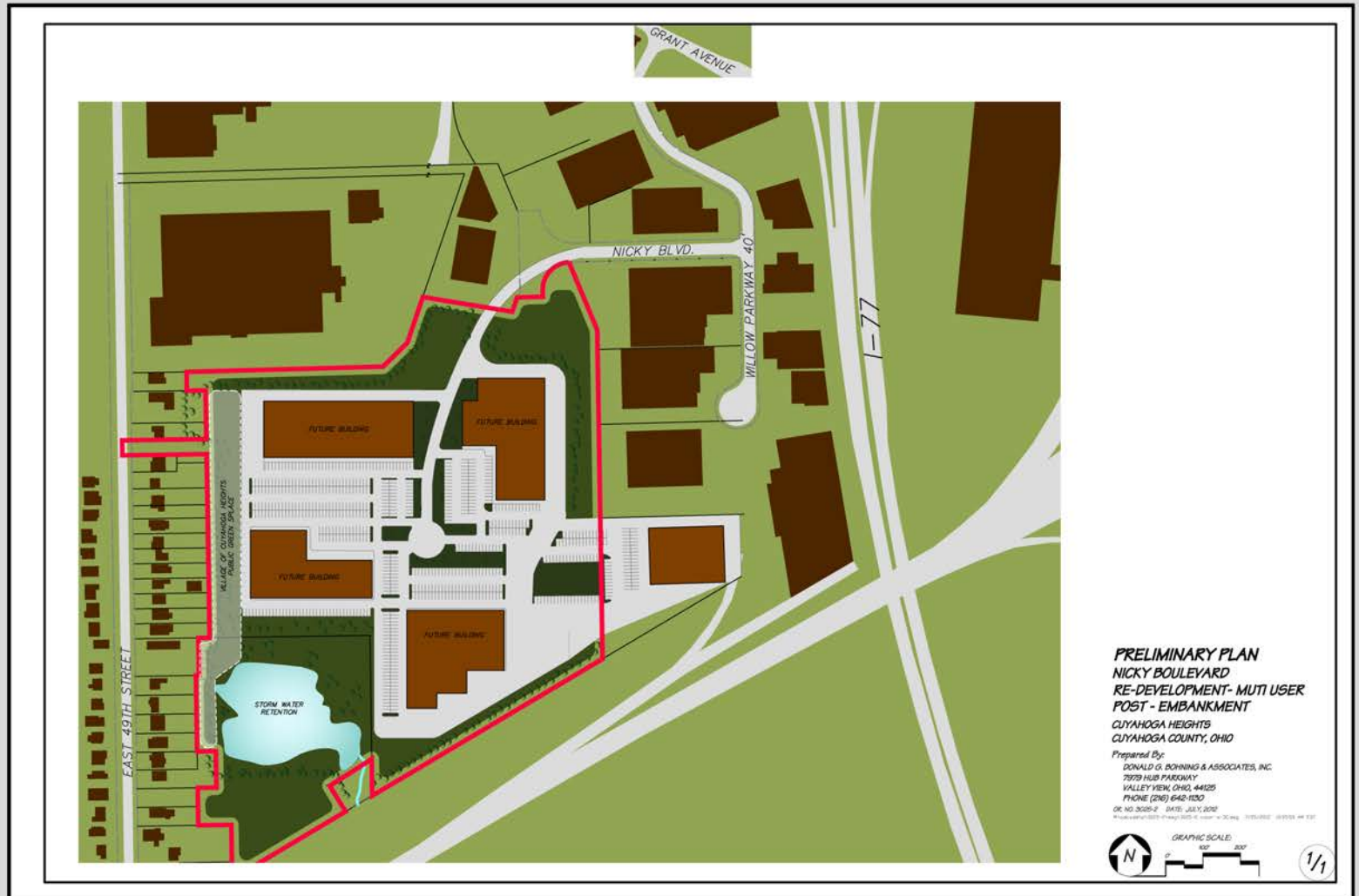


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Nicky Boulevard Landfill Redevelopment and Storm Sewer Extension

As you may recall, in 2022 the project litigation was settled and in 2023, we shifted the focus to the residential backyards along East 49th Street and the construction of the permanent retention pond. These areas have drastically changed the footprint of the surroundings, the backyards are fortified, and the future green space is taking shape. We look to finalize topsoil and permanent seeding this spring, and our second round of tree installation is slated for the fall of 2024, with an additional 40 trees being planted. Moving forward, we continue to face challenges with the railroad on the southside of the landfill which has caused new delays with the speed of this project. All in all, we couldn't be any more pleased for what this has done for our East 49th Street homeowners which will pay dividends for our housing stock, long into the future.



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Village Hall Campus

The Village Hall Campus improvements were approved by council last fall with the first three phases scheduled for this calendar year. This is most exciting news for our young people and families!

★ Parking

You will soon see pavement removal and demolition taking place to “pave” the way for our new splash pad. This splash pad will start to transform the campus while adding additional parking to the south side of the village hall in the fall. The new parking will bring the total number of stalls to 81; a nice upgrade from the 61 stalls that currently exist today.



★ Pool

Our service department has completely removed the liner and a contractor has stripped the pool down to its original surface and will replaster the entire pool surface for the opening of our 2024 pool season which is scheduled for June 1.

★ Pickleball Court

With the Village Hall Campus project underway, we have decided to relocate the proposed pickleball courts to tie in with work taking place at the pool. The pickleball courts will be under construction in spring and early summer and we look forward to incorporating another vast improvement to the pool area.

★ Playground

Look for a new playground in 2025 as part of the campus project, much like what was done at Bacci Park.

★ Splash Pad

As we continue to work through these campus improvements, we will share progress updates with the community and hope to have everything functional by July 4, 2024, with pavement restoration, landscaping, and lighting to follow before year’s end. The new splash pad will allow our residents and pass holders to enjoy it during our beautiful late summer and fall days.

★ Stairways

After we get done with all the above-noted items, the next phase will see a stairway from the Village Hall Campus down to Sunny Pond and Bacci Park. This will tie-in the Village Hall Campus with all that Bacci Park has to offer to its residents.

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Willowbrook Connector Trail Project

The village completed the underground storm sewer, lighting conduits and the first layer of asphalt for the trail in the late fall and early winter. Look for the final layer of asphalt to be installed in early spring; topsoil and lighting improvements to be completed by summer—and ready for residential use noting that there will be two handicap parking spots available for those in need, and absolutely **no** motorized vehicles will be permitted on this trail at any time.

I hope this information was helpful, as we wanted to give our residents a comprehensive outline of all the projects going on around town, I know it's a lot to take in; however, as with all projects, they are subject to change.

I wanted to mention that our village has an emergency contact system called Rave. This program can send out messages to all village residents and businesses via telephone in case of an emergency and/or pertinent information that will impact us locally. Many of our residents are taking advantage of this program. If you are not enrolled and are interested in receiving this notification, please contact Barb Cash at the village hall during normal work hours and give her your cell phone number (which will not be made public), and she will be more than happy to assist you.

In closing, although many of these projects will cause us some form of heartburn during construction, upon their completion—they will continue to keep our small community vibrant and visible to all those who live, work and visit here, as well as to those who may wish to do so in the future.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact our office.

Very truly yours,

Jack M. Bacci, Mayor
Village of Cuyahoga Heights

