

# Mayor, City officials seek investments in New Bedford public safety and neighborhood infrastructure

Mayor Jon Mitchell today announced a proposal to devote unused funds carried over from the previous fiscal year to invest in key public safety and neighborhood infrastructure needs, as well as bolster the city's finances.

The Mayor joined City Councillors, Police Chief Joseph Cordeiro, Public Infrastructure Commissioner Jamie Ponte, and Chief Financial Officer Ari Sky, during the announcement at Sassaquin Pond.

"Focusing on public safety and infrastructure are two key investments for every city," said Mayor Jon Mitchell. "Replacing aging police vehicles for our officers in the field with unused funds from the previous fiscal year makes all the sense in the world, and we want to ensure every officer has the tools to do his or her job."

On neighborhood infrastructure, the Mayor announced the second installment of a City initiative to negate runoff pollution from the surrounding streets to Sassaquin Pond. "Sassaquin Pond is a North End treasure and we must continue to work hard to protect it for future generations by treating stormwater that discharges to the pond," said Mayor Mitchell.

"It is important that the City of New Bedford continue to invest in critical areas including infrastructure and public safety," said Ward 1 Councillor Brad Markey. "These upgrades to the water filtration equipment for rainwater at Sassaquin Pond will ensure that the pond is clean and remains protected

from possible pollutants. The City's Department of Public Infrastructure has devoted time and attention to safeguarding Sassaquin Pond, and this continues that effort."

The public safety investment will go toward eight front-line police vehicles and a number of pre-owned vehicles for unmarked use. The existing fleet of 68 police vehicles currently has an average age of eight years of service, despite previous rounds of upgrades, so continued vehicle investments remains a major priority for the Police Department.

The neighborhood infrastructure funds would be dedicated to continuing to improve water quality in Sassaquin Pond by protecting it from stormwater, which drains from a 20-acre drainage area in the vicinity of May Street into the pond. Annually, the new infrastructure will treat approximately 9.5 million gallons of water.

The Mayor also outlined his proposal to direct \$1,150,000 of unused funds to the City's so-called "rainy day" fund, or Stabilization Fund, and \$455,000 to the OPEB Trust Fund, which helps cover the City's obligation for post-employment benefits excluding pensions.

The City's continuing effort to boost its reserves and address its long-term financial liabilities have been important factors in the decision of Wall Street rating agencies to award the City the highest bond rating in the City's modern history.