

CITY OF PORTSMOUTH



PRESS RELEASE

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Portsmouth announces completion of long term sewer separation projects

PORTSMOUTH, NH – The City of Portsmouth recently notified the Environmental Protection Agency that it has completed the last of its identified and scheduled long term control sewer separation projects. “This is a milestone to be recognized,” said City Manager John Bohenko. “Over the course of 15 years, the City completed approximately \$50 million project cost of work that has reduced flooding, improved drainage and delivered tangible environmental benefits.”

The series of long term control projects began in 2002 and included work in the Lincoln Street area, along Islington Street and its low-lying neighborhoods, as well as work on Court Street and State Street. The sewer separation effort required the installation of separate drain pipe and separate sewer pipe in place of older, undersized combined pipe. This work was initiated to reduce the discharge of untreated sewage into local water bodies during storm events, but the City used the required infrastructure upgrades to make other improvements.

“We have made a significant effort to leverage our funds during these separation projects,” Peter Rice, Director of Public Works, explained. “The City upgraded water pipe where needed, encouraged the gas company to expand service, and improved sidewalks, roads and streetscape.” This work has reduced backups in basements, eliminated some drainage and flooding issues, and improved local water quality. The Director added: “In addition to the

environmental benefits from these projects, these investments will provide reliable service to our residents for the next 100 years.”

“Flooding used to occur pretty regularly at the Bartlett and Islington Street intersection during storms, but following the City’s work in the area I have not seen any flooding at this intersection,” reports Ed Hays, President of Ricci Lumber on Bartlett Street.

“While the project was difficult to live with given the frequent heavy equipment and dust, the improved drainage on Union Street in my neighborhood, along with the new pavement, curbing and sidewalks, are all great improvements,” stated Anthony Blenkinsop of 484 Union Street.

There is still work to do in managing the City’s stormwater collection system and sewer system. As City Engineer Terry Desmarais explained, “additional studies and monitoring are underway to understand where the systems are still challenged so that existing and anticipated stormwater regulations and water quality goals can be met.” It is an ongoing process to make system improvements and to meet evolving state and federal regulations.

“Although the community has more investments to make in stormwater and wastewater improvements, it is important to recognize how many improvements have been made and to thank the City Council and the residents of Portsmouth for their support over these past 15 years,” said City Manager Bohenko.