



Ministerial Statement
by
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Minister of Public Works

Update on Island-Wide Roadworks

Friday, July 21st, 2023

Mr. Speaker as I traverse across the Island daily to undertake the roles that the people of Bermuda have entrusted me with, I physically feel every crack and crevasse on our roads.

Mr. Speaker, members of this Honourable House and the listening public, should note that I am intrinsically aware of the state of our highway infrastructure and the issues are not lost on myself or any of the technical officers within the Department of Works and Engineering.

We receive reports every day from residents who are not satisfied with the length of time it is taking to fix the issues. Hearing these reports – especially those technical officers who day in and day work tirelessly to provide services to the Country – serve as an incentive to work harder to address them.

Mr. Speaker, akin to what I have previously said in four (4) Statements prior to this one today – the repair of our roads are a priority for the Ministry of Public Works.

To reiterate, the immediate pain for the motoring public will be well worth it as when completed, these current infrastructure initiatives – that is BELCO's \$250 million capital plan and our own Water and Wastewater Masterplan – which are digging up our roads; will see the protection of our fresh water supplies, protection of our electrical infrastructure and ensuring sewage is properly disposed of.

Therefore **Mr. Speaker** with this being said, I rise again to provide this House with yet another report on the state of the island's roads and the various ongoing trenching projects.

In the March 2023 update, I announced various completed, ongoing and planned trenching and asphaltting works. **Mr. Speaker**, with your indulgence please allow these updates to those projects and the steps we are taking to address them.

However, before I begin – a slight reminder to honourable members, a “pull hole” is a hole dug every 800 feet in the road to allow for the cables to be pulled through the laid conduits and to be joined. With this reminder given, I deliver the following status regarding the Trenching and “Pull Holes” portions –

1. The BELCO trench work on the Middle Rd in Southampton from Lighthouse Rd to Evans Bay through the roadway and railway trail did indeed start in April 2023. The works are currently by 5-Star Island and it is anticipated that it will be another two (2) months before reaching the railway trail. By that time we anticipate the removal of traffic lights currently in place.
2. The BELCO “pull hole” work for Middle Road near the Whitney Institute Middle School is now completed; inclusive of the pull hole work for Store Hill & North Shore Road up to Barker’s Hill roundabout.
3. The BELCO “pull hole” work for the Eastern Northshore route – that is from Palmetto Road railway trail to Old Military Road and Frog Lane to the National Sports Centre Substation – is set to commence in September subject to the delivery of specialized equipment; and
4. Unfortunately attributed to supply chain issues, the works for “pull holes” at Ettrick’s Veterinary on Middle Road, Warwick to Lighthouse Hill, Middle Road to Jews Bay has not started as previously planned. This work will commence once National Sports Centre pull hole work has been completed.

Mr. Speaker in regard to the asphaltting portions, I am pleased to share the following –

1. The permanent paving for trenching works at Coney Island, Fractious Street and Wilkinson Avenue have all been completed.
2. The permanent paving for Harrington Sound Road is progressing steadily with works currently around Shark Hole Hill heading towards Tom Moore’s Tavern driveway; and
3. Repair works for uneven surfaces have been addressed at Mullet Bay Road near Stokes Point Road, St. David’s Entrance, Middle Road at Warwick Academy, and Middle Road at St. Anthony’s Church.

Mr. Speaker, these are not the only roadworks that have been completed over the last four (4) months. Apart from those projects that I have now updated this Honourable House on, the following works have been completed –

Firstly I am sure Honourable members are aware of the flooding issue at Perimeter Lane near Marsh Folly in Pembroke. This issue should be resolved in the immediate as the Ministry has now cleared the boreholes allowing for drainage.

In addition to the clearing of the boreholes, an asphalt lip on Perimeter Lane at Glebe Road junction and a drainage channel has been installed at the Glebe Road bus layby to allow for excess rainwater to be redirected into the nearby canal – thereby reducing the flooding risk for the area.

Mr. Speaker, since the start of our unusually wet first few months of summer and to address the pothole situation – the Ministry has filled in nearly one hundred (100) different potholes in twenty-one (21) different areas across the island. And **Mr. Speaker**, just for clarity – if the potholes are reported to potholes@gov.bm – they will be fixed.

Mr. Speaker, \$2,027,000 has been budgeted for road works this year, the Ministry is the recipient of a Nine Hundred Thousand dollar (\$900,000) carry forward from the previous fiscal year to enable more capital roadworks to be done this year.

Several locations that are some of the worst areas will be addressed – like South Road, Southampton near Henry the 8th, Middle Road, Warwick near T. N Tatem and South Road at Collectors Hill Road junction - to name a few.

Mr. Speaker, to make the Ministry’s position crystal clear to honourable members and the listening public, there now is an allocated budget of Two Million, Nine Hundred and Twenty-Seven Thousand dollars (\$2,927,000) devoted to new paving works for this fiscal year.

However, **Mr. Speaker** this is nowhere close to the substantive investment needed to repave all of our roads. For example, if the Government were to undertake an immediate initiative to fully repave those public and private roads that are in “poor” condition – approximately 226 km or half of our roadways – it would cost approximately One Hundred Million dollars (\$100,000,000) over a ten (10) year period. Let me repeat, that’s Ten Million dollars (\$10,000,000) per year for ten consecutive years – regardless of what the Government’s economic position or the Island’s macroeconomic status might be. This would be a quarter of the entire Ministry’s Capital Budget allocation for this year spent on just road paving alone.

Mr. Speaker, just to put this into perspective:

1. There are 263 public roads totalling approximately 200 Km
2. There are 1,080 private roads totalling approximately 253 Km
3. The estimated price for paving just 1 kilometre (or half a mile) of roadway on both lanes is Six Hundred Thousand dollars (\$600,000.00). These costs are broken down to a single major component namely the exorbitant price of Asphalt material. It currently costs the Ministry \$0.62 cents on every dollar used for road paving for this material.

4. On island there is only a finite amount of paving equipment and a handful of personnel qualified to undertake the required works. All spread thinly across just two (2) large organisations – one of which is the Government.
5. Total cost to pave all public roads would be approximately \$120 million
6. Total cost to pave all private roads would be approximately \$76 million

Mr. Speaker, these are significant amounts of money the \$2,927,000 allocated this year will put but a small dent in the amount of paving we will do. There has to be a balance between competing infrastructure projects and other government priorities.

Mr. Speaker, difficult decisions must be made by a Government. Due to this economic climate we find ourselves in today – we will continue to look at ways that we can increase funding to road paving to improve the driving experience

In addition **Mr. Speaker** the Ministry does not solely focus on fixing the roadways for vehicles but we also ensure the safety of pedestrians. As such, the Cabinet will soon consider a request to purchase sixteen (16) brand new solar powered Flashing Beacon Signal sets that will be installed at crosswalks in various locations across the island.

From Mullet Bay in St. George's to Maxi-mart in White Hill, there will be new safety signals to protect those crossing our roadways.

To further protect pedestrians, the Ministry has now repainted some twenty (20) crosswalks around the Island. This can be seen in places like Flatts Village in Smith's Parish, Crawl Hill, Whale Bay and Harlem Heights in Hamilton Parish and outside Ice Queen in Paget Parish. The next scheduled work areas are in Ferry Reach in St. George's, South Road in Warwick and Middle Road near Cobb's Hill.

Mr. Speaker as I have said previously, yes the state of our roads are uncomfortable but this sacrifice is well worth the wait. The Ministry of Public Works commits to getting our roadways fixed however, we are not in the position to do everything all at once.

Mr. Speaker, I continuously thank the public for their patience with this initiative and as the overall infrastructure works conclude, we will follow with permanent asphalt paving. While not ideal, in the interim the Ministry will continue to apply temporary asphaltting and fix potholes.

As always **Mr. Speaker**, I will keep this House informed as we progress.

Thank You **Mr. Speaker**.