

Mebane City Beat: Making road improvements

BY KELLY HUNTER
SPECIAL TO THE NEWS OF ORANGE

Now that spring has sprung, many events are getting ready to kick off within our festive community. The City of Mebane, in its pursuit of increasing the quality of life for residents, is in the process of adding new features for pedestrian safety and fixing the road quality downtown before these events begin. Citizens living near downtown can expect to see some roadwork during both the daytime and nighttime hours throughout April. But what does the work consist of, and who is responsible for performing the work?

Last August, the City advertised a Street Resurfacing Contract that involved patching, milling, a Last August, the City advertised a Street Resurfacing Contract that involved patching, milling, and resurfacing various sections of Clay Street. Bids were received, and in September 2024, the Mebane City Council awarded the contract to Turner Asphalt, LLC of Raleigh, for \$800,000.00, as they had submitted the lowest bid for this project. The work has already begun, and many improvements are being made, such as constructing two concrete bulb-outs. Concrete bulb-outs are a pedestrian safety measure that extends the sidewalk or curb line into the parking lane. A concrete bulb-out narrows the road at the mid-block crossing location, improving pedestrian safety by shortening crossing distances, improving visibility since the travel path or crossing begins at the edge of the curb extension instead of the existing sidewalk, and encouraging drivers to slow down. The contractor, Turner Asphalt, constructed concrete bulb-outs at the existing mid-block pedestrian crossings located on Clay Street, between Third and Fourth Street (where you can cross from Crafted the Art of the Taco over to Blackbird/Hen Feathers at The Elegant Relic), and on Fourth Street, between Center Street and Clay Street, near Muffin's Ice Cream Shoppe. The concrete bulb-outs were the first part of the project completed, with the work occurring the first week of April, from March 31- April 4.

The project's second phase occurred April 7-11 and involved storm drainage improvements. Turner Asphalt worked to install a storm drainage pipe across Fourth Street. On the southwest corner of Clay Street and Fourth Street, a new drainage structure was installed to resolve some flooding issues in the area. The City believes it is crucial to address these issues to prevent damage to the road infrastructure or business properties.

For the project's third phase, citizens can expect to see some overnight work happening April 13-18 and April 21-25. During the hours of 9 p.m. to 9 a.m., the contractor will be patching, milling, and resurfacing Clay Street, from Second Street to Fifth Street, and Fourth Street, between Center Street and Clay Street. Once that is complete, all existing crosswalks with stamped asphalt, a type of asphalt paving where a pattern is imprinted onto the surface to create a brick appearance, will be reinstalled, and parking spaces restriped.

The patching, milling, and resurfacing portion of the project will occur overnight since Turner Asphalt will need to close Clay Street and Fourth Street to through traffic. Closing down these roads is a safety measure to protect both Mebane residents and the contractor. For those unfamiliar with patching, it repairs damaged asphalt surfaces, like potholes or cracks, by filling or



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Road improvements are made on Fourth Street in downtown Mebane.

replacing the damaged area with new asphalt. Milling a street involves removing the asphalt to a specified depth; for this project, the top 2" inches of asphalt will be removed. A milling machine contains a rotating barrel drum with teeth to chip away the existing asphalt. Once the existing asphalt is chipped away, the material is placed onto a conveyor that transports the material to a dump truck. Where patching is required, additional asphalt will be removed to a depth determined by the inspector/engineer to support the surface course. For the resurfacing portion of the project, all debris must be removed from the road surface. Once the debris is removed, a woven fabric will be placed on top of the existing surface before the final asphalt surface course is applied. After installation of the new asphalt, rollers will compact the asphalt to the required density to provide a smooth, even surface.

The impact on Mebane citizens while this work occurs should be minimal. The construction of the concrete bulb-outs and drainage structure installation have all occurred during daylight hours. During those daylight hours, the contractor utilized flaggers to maintain one lane of traffic, and the sidewalk downtown remained open except for portions near the concrete bulb-outs. The project's final step, the pavement markings, can be completed during daylight hours; however, the contractor currently plans to perform the work at night. Citizens should know that the night work will be performed Sunday evening, April 13, through

Friday morning, April 18. No work will be allowed during Easter weekend or special scheduled events downtown.

A few key noticeable differences citizens can expect once the work is complete is the improved riding quality of Clay Street and Fourth Street, with the road being much smoother. Another difference involves the enhanced stamped asphalt color for the mid-block crossings, with the pavement markings being more visible. The most notable change for our downtown patrons will be converting three existing parking spaces into handicapped spaces. The new handicap spots are proposed at the following locations: one at the northeast corner of Third Street and Clay Street, the second on the southeast side of the mid-block crossing on Clay Street, and the last at the southeast corner of Fourth Street and Clay Street.

The City of Mebane is excited to prolong the longevity of its infrastructure downtown by making these improvements. During the fall of 2023, the City repaired the existing underground water, sewer, and storm drainage system along Clay Street and Fourth Street. The repairs required pavement cuts and the filling of voids underneath the original concrete pavement. Project Engineer Mark Reich stated, "With the completion of this project and the prior infrastructure improvements, the downtown area is ready for the next century of service and to keep downtown Mebane a positively charming place to shop, eat, and gather for community events."

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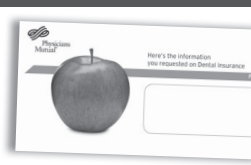
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