



Town of Hanson

Highway Department



797 Indian Head Street
Hanson, Massachusetts 02341
(781) 293-2822 FAX (781) 293-5763
highway@hanson-ma.gov

To: Lisa Green, Town Administrator

Regarding: Services lost amid potential budget cuts

The Hanson Highway Department is comprised of eight (8) total positions, six (6) of which are staffed as of this date January 21, 2025. The Department has the responsibility to maintain all 66.2 miles of roadway within the town to include drain lines and structures underneath. The Highway Department is responsible for issuing all road opening and trenching permits for the town. The list of duties and responsibilities for the five (5) on-road staff is immensely larger than what is led to believe. In addition to road management tasks, the Highway Department is also responsible for other aspects and operations around town as well to include;

- **Maintaining roadways** includes, but is not limited to patch repair of potholes, as well as full reclamation done in conjunction with paving subcontractors. The Highway Department is solely responsible for the backing of all newly paved roadways. This means placing all material behind newly placed roadways, in most cases loam and grass seed. Installing all street signage within the Town due to “wear and tear” or accidents. The installation of asphalt berms is also done by the highway department when a storm water runoff issue arises or the existing berm is destroyed.
- **Catch basin** cleaning and repair work. Catch basin cleaning and larger basin rebuilds are done through a contractor. The Highway Department is responsible for repairing any basin to a depth of three (3) vertical feet and does many smaller repairs and rebuilds to help alleviate any potential drainage issues throughout the town. It is critical that this continue to be done to comply with State Regulations and our Storm Water Management Plan.
- **Storm water Management** is a cooperative process between the Highway Department and a contracted company. All physical work is performed by the Highway Employees to include maintaining storm water runoff and drain line readiness. This also includes utilizing a jet rod trailer to clear and clean out those drain lines that are blocked. The state permitting for storm water is critical to keep the Town in compliance. This budget cannot be cut.



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- **Street sweeping** consists of sweeping the roadways, along with manually cleaning some gutter lines of debris the sweeper cannot reach. This should ideally take place twice a year with a very possible third for town cleanliness. Sweeping in the fall removes down leaves before the winter months and sweeping in the spring cleans all roadways of sand and debris left over from winter, keeping our drains free of debris so that roadways and residential homes do not flood.
- **Line painting** (street lines and crosswalks) is performed annually to repaint old, worn lines that may be deemed unsafe and less visible. Line striping is done for all roadway safety including crosswalks and pedestrian crossings. The Highway Department will also re-line municipal parking lots as necessary. This task would be considered a bi-annual task.
- **Grading and maintenance on private ways** is a two-step process used to keep all private ways in good operating condition. The Highway department contracts out a grading service to regrade all private dirt roads at a maximum of twice a year. The Highway Employees work in conjunction with this grading company to level and roll each road as it is completed. In between these services, the department will fill potholes formed by weather conditions and wear and tear on the roadways.
- **Park Upkeep and maintenance** involves the mowing and weed wacking of public facility lawns, fields, parks, and ball fields. There is a total of 14 locations that the Highway Department currently mows. This does not include the meadows out back of the food pantry that needs to be mowed to a certain height in preparation for winter. This task alone takes one employee two weeks to complete. As far as the landscaping of public places, this task takes two employees, 40 hours a week, from roughly late March through the end of November, approximately 9 months a year. Along with all normal upkeep, the Recreation department will have special requests for special dates for large events. This is extra time and money essentially donated by the Highway Department.
- **Snow and Ice Operations** are a vital part of the Highway Departments operation. This is the largest operating cost of the department. Snow and Ice operations ensures the safety of all residents and people within the Town of Hanson during winter events. The Highway Department is responsible to clear all roadways of snow and ice. These roadways total all 65 rough miles in Hanson to include forty-nine (49) private ways that are plowed and salted.



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- **Other services that are provided are:**

- Assisting Conservation with cleaning trails
- Assisting Water Department with water breaks and/or a CDL driver if needed
- Assist school department at times providing and loading salt when needed for school roads and parking lots
- Assist Emergency Rescue Teams (1 Employee about once to twice a month)
- Maintain street signs and crosswalk signs
- Assist Camp Kiwannee with road grading and small issues as needed/requested
- Service and maintain fuel, fuel logs, inspections, and records
- Tree/brush clean up along roadways
- Elevate low lying limbs that impact driver safety
- Retention pond, outfall cleanings
- Town Elections-Set up and tear down of all voting booths during all elections
- Periodically repair small/minor problems on Town vehicles
- Assist Animal Control with picking up larger “road kill”
- Assist with Green Hanson Clean-Ups, Winter Fest, and most other Town wide events

The list of tasks the Highway Department has to handle is ever growing. If there were significant budget cuts to the department, almost all of these tasks listed above and some will be scaled back.

Private roadways would be the first budget lines that would be forced to go. Although the Department is here to help as many Residents as possible, private roads would unfortunately be cut significantly. What this means is grading the dirt roads would drop to a maximum of once per year if any. These funds are received through an Article specific for this reason. With a cut back, this almost surely means no extra funds will be afforded.

Other large task items to be scaled back would be road repairs and maintenance, catch basin cleanings and repairs, street sweeping and park maintenance. These tasks at first glance are done with manual labor. Though it is the Departments stance that labor force is the last item to be cut, everything else will be. A large issue would be equipment maintenance budgets. If equipment



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goes down, the Department will be forced to halt operations if we are unable to afford to rectify those issues.

The help we give to other Departments will come to a halt. Essentially, this Department would be restricted to performing those tasks deemed absolutely necessary for the Town.

It is the Highways Department's goal to be as helpful to the public and residents of Hanson as possible. We strive to give the best effort and product we can to insure the roadways and all other areas we touch are as clean and safe as possible. Whatever the decision, we will still continue to do as much as we can for the public. It is with complete sincerity, that we plead to keep our Department running as efficiently as we can. The Highway Department has a very "bare bones" budget as is, and we would hate for services be hindered even further due to budget cuts.

On Behalf of the staff here at the Hanson Highway Department, we thank you for any support, and look forward to working for The Hanson Residents for the foreseeable future.

Richard W Jasmin

Richard W. Jasmin

Director

1/22/2025