

Thanks for Progress

As we approach Thanksgiving, it's a great time to give thanks and reflect on the progress of the past year and of the past few years.. We can think of 50 reasons.

1. Completion of the new \$90 million Gardner Elementary School – a state-of-the-art facility
2. Grant Funds and willing lenders allowing renovation to begin of the Ryan Block at 42-52 Parker Street, Gardner into 29 new apartments.
3. A buyer willing to undertake complete renovation of the Flat Iron building, making attractive commercial real estate available at 25 Main Street, Gardner
4. The success of the 99 Restaurant and Starbucks at Timpany Crossroads Plaza with new businesses and offices being added now and in the coming months.
5. The increased level of Surgical Services to be offered when the new Surgical Pavilion at Heywood Hospital is completed in 2023.
6. The Health Center, Urgent Care, and other services to be offered at the new facility being constructed on Route 68 near Walmart
7. The completion of designs for the \$4 million dollar project in the Rear Main Street corridor to provide dozens of additional housing units, an event plaza, and parking.
8. The upcoming terraced Maki Park on Parker Street, Gardner across from the Gardner Ale House.
9. The upcoming Park Street Park converting an unsightly old electric sub-station into an appealing park and additional parking.
10. The upcoming demolition of the Greenwood Pool House and construction of a new Pavilion .
11. Further design, planning, and funding for the eventual bike trail additions and over the over Route 140 pedestrian-bike bridge expected to be completed in the next 4 years.
12. Further improvements at the Gardner Dog Park to address water issues which have plagued the site since when it was originally a ballpark.
13. Completion of the Athletic Fields and upcoming Concession Stand at Gardner High School

14. Completion of various paving projects in the City to include the sprucing up of Downtown Gardner with new sidewalks and paving.
15. Upgrades in recent years and ongoing improvements at Ovila Case Park featuring repairs to the Fantasy Playground, a new basketball court, walking trail, parking lot, and picnic trail.
16. Recent year usage of funds from sewer rate revenue to completely rebuild the wet well, and add or upgrade electrical service and pumps at the Coleman and Dyer Street Pump Stations.
17. Complete replacement of the lockers at the Gardner Middle School
18. Recent year repainting of the elevated Gardner water tank.
19. Completion of improvements at Gardner High School including the gym floor and auditorium
20. Recent year improvement in water quality and facilities at the Wastewater Treatment Facility totaling over \$11.4 million
21. Proposal and approval of the conversion of the former Waterford Elementary School to a new Community Center in 2023 allowing for the expansion of Senior services and other community services with leases to community non-profits.
22. Continued support of the Arts and Culture featuring community supported arts and widely popular Concerts at Monument Park in the summer.
23. Expansion of National Night Out to the Gardner High School grounds for an even larger community event.
24. The repurposing of the Elm Street School to house Gardner Academy, the Boys and Girls Club, and eventually the Gardner School District offices.
25. The efforts of the current administration in the City of Gardner to do something with unused buildings such as efforts to sell the former Prospect Street School and School Street school and get the properties back on the tax rolls.
26. Continued efforts to not only improve the Education Curriculum in the Gardner Public Schools, but also go so far as to make the District a model for other communities throughout the country.
27. Financial Management so sound that Gardner was given a perfect audit by the Federal Government for a 2nd straight year.

28. Responsibly studying the proposed expansion of the Gardner landfill to minimize environmental impact and act in a responsible manner on behalf of the City's rate payers.
29. Creation of a proactive effort via strategically placed cameras to catch those who dispose of large items of trash improperly.
30. Focusing on and actually working on improving youth behavioral health through a proactive effort on social/emotional learning in the Gardner School District.
31. An active Department of Community Development and Planning working on getting blighted buildings sold so that new owners are making the City better through renovations and other improvements.
32. Improvements in Public Safety in Gardner through transparent audits of the Police and Fire Departments, Management improvements in the Gardner Police Department, bringing back a part-time domestic violence position, and adding to staff of Animal Control..
33. Application by the City for grants to replace its aging main water line in a proactive effort.
34. Ongoing efforts at unprecedented transparency in City Government including the proactive publication of documents in meeting agendas, publication of the video of recorded meetings, and the upgrading of equipment to HD quality in the past couple years.
35. The planned study of City salaries to keep the Chair City competitive in its hiring.
36. Zoning Changes to reflect actual use of properties and to facilitate uses of benefit to the City.
37. Upgrading of computer security software to proactively avoid potential vulnerabilities.
38. Proactive efforts at storefront revitalization and filling vacant storefronts through innovative funding partnerships between the State and the City.
39. Proactive protection of the open spaces in the City of Gardner.
40. Proactive studies to determine how to avoid flooding in the Downtown area from Crystal Lake in the event of a major hurricane or other water event.
41. The achievement of a major milestone on January 1, 2023, Gardner's 100th anniversary as a City.
42. Proactive efforts in initiating discussions as to whether it would be in the best interests of the City to review the City Charter.

43. Proactive efforts in maintaining various programs to encourage those in recovery from addiction and efforts to prevent overdose deaths.
44. Ongoing community support of Gardner's faith-based origins and continuing the tradition of prayer opening and closing each City Council meeting.
45. Participating in the proactive remediation of insects through cooperation with the Central Mass Mosquito Control Project.
46. Proactive efforts to utilize available Federal funding to extend cable and internet service to any areas in the City not yet served.
47. Plans to study whether a new industrial park could be built off of Matthews Street in Gardner.
48. Recognition by the Massachusetts Municipal Association for Gardner's transparency in providing online maps for projects, open spaces, and other useful maps.
49. Participation of the community in the Keep Gardner Beautiful Days held twice this year and resulting in the collection of trash from the side of Gardner's roads.
50. Unprecedented efforts towards and receiving statewide recognition in recent years for proactive efforts towards saving lives during the Covid-19 pandemic via vaccination efforts and the coordination of home test kit availability.

Thank you to the entire team of the Chair City for the progress over the past year. We are sure the residents of Gardner appreciate all of the effort.