

Old Town Newark Streetscape Project

Frequently Asked Questions — Construction & Development

The City of Newark is moving forward with a \$15 million streetscape improvement along Thornton Avenue between Olive and Ash Streets in Old Town Newark. Construction is scheduled to commence in late 2026 and is expected to be complete within two years. The following questions and answers are intended to help residents, visitors, and business owners understand what to expect throughout the project.

Project Overview

Q: What is the Old Town Newark Streetscape Project?

The Old Town Newark Streetscape Project is a \$15 million capital improvement initiative that will reconstruct a 0.3-mile segment of Thornton Avenue between Olive and Ash Streets. The project converts this corridor into a complete street balancing the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers. Key features include new Class II bike lanes, widened sidewalks, bulb-outs at intersections, new landscaping, street trees, decorative paving, pedestrian-scale lighting, and street furniture — all designed to create a welcoming and vibrant Old Town environment.

Q: Why is this project being undertaken?

The project implements the Old Town Newark Specific Plan, which calls for a people-centered corridor that supports walkability, promotes biking, and encourages economic activity. The improvements are intended to revitalize Old Town Newark as a destination, improve safety for all road users, and make the district more attractive for residents, visitors, and businesses alike.

Q: When will construction begin and how long will it take?

Construction is scheduled to commence in late 2026. The project is expected to be substantially complete within two years, with anticipated completion in late 2028. The construction schedule may be refined closer to the project start date based on contractor availability and permitting timelines.

Traffic & Access During Construction

Q: Will Thornton Avenue remain open during construction?

Yes. Thornton Avenue will remain open to vehicle traffic throughout the duration of construction. However, travelers should expect lane restrictions, temporary lane shifts, and traffic management zones as work progresses through different segments of the project. Motorists are encouraged to allow additional travel time and follow all posted signage.

Q: What traffic control measures will be in place?

Traffic control measures will be in place throughout the project. These may include flaggers directing traffic in active work zones, temporary traffic signals or stop controls at affected intersections, construction signage and advance warning signs, and temporary lane narrowing or shifts. The City and its contractor will coordinate to minimize peak-hour disruptions where feasible.

Q: Will there be any full road closures?

Full road closures of Thornton Avenue are not anticipated. However, short-duration closures of specific intersections or driveways may be necessary during certain phases of work such as underground utility installation or intersection reconstruction. Affected businesses and residents will be notified in advance of any temporary closures.

Q: Will pedestrians and cyclists still be able to use the corridor?

Pedestrian and bicycle access will be maintained throughout construction to the greatest extent possible. Temporary detour paths and signage will be provided when sidewalks or bike routes are blocked. Safe routes to nearby businesses will be clearly marked at all times.

Parking

Q: Will parking be available on Thornton Avenue during construction?

Parking along Thornton Avenue will be restricted at various times and locations as construction activities require. Restrictions will be staged to minimize the overall number of spaces removed at any one time and will move along the corridor as construction progresses.

Q: How will I know when and where parking is restricted?

Temporary "No Parking" signs will be posted at least 72 hours in advance of any parking restriction. The City will also provide updates through the project website and community notifications. Business owners along the corridor will receive direct outreach when restrictions are anticipated near their locations.

Q: Where can people park when on-street parking is temporarily unavailable?

Alternative parking is available in the surrounding Old Town area. The City will provide information about nearby public parking locations as part of construction communications. Signage directing visitors to available parking may be installed during the project.

Business Access

Q: Will customers be able to access businesses during construction?

Yes. Access to all businesses along the project corridor will be maintained throughout construction. The contractor is required to ensure that pedestrian and vehicle access to storefronts, offices, and other establishments is never completely blocked. If a specific driveway or entrance must be temporarily impacted, a safe and clearly marked alternative access route will be provided.

Q: How will deliveries be handled for businesses along the corridor?

Delivery access will be coordinated to continue throughout construction. The project team will work directly with affected businesses to identify delivery windows and temporary staging areas when normal delivery zones are within an active construction zone. Business owners are encouraged to contact the project team early in construction to establish a delivery coordination plan.

Q: What support is available for businesses during construction?

The City is committed to minimizing the economic impact of construction on Old Town businesses. A project liaison will be available to coordinate with businesses, address concerns, and provide advance notice of construction activities. The City may also implement programs or promotional activities to encourage continued patronage of Old Town businesses during the construction period.

Q: Will there be a way for businesses to report concerns or issues?

Yes. A dedicated project contact will be available to receive and respond to concerns from businesses and residents. Contact information will be provided prior to the start of construction and posted on the project webpage.

Construction Impacts & Mitigation

Q: What hours will construction activity take place?

Construction activity will generally take place during daytime hours on weekdays, in accordance with the City's noise ordinance. Work requiring lane restrictions may be scheduled during off-peak

hours to minimize traffic impacts. Specific work hours will be confirmed by the contractor prior to the start of construction.

Q: Should I expect noise, dust, or vibration?

Some noise, dust, and vibration are inherent to construction activities of this nature. The contractor will be required to implement best management practices to minimize these impacts, including dust control measures, equipment muffling, and scheduling particularly disruptive activities during lower-impact periods where feasible.

Q: Will there be any impact on utilities such as water, power, or gas?

Widespread utility impacts are not anticipated, but short-duration service interruptions may occur during underground utility work. Affected property owners and businesses will be notified in advance of any planned utility work that could affect service.

Q: Will construction staging take place on private property?

No. The project is designed to avoid any right-of-way acquisition. All construction staging will take place within the project limits on public right-of-way. Private properties will not be used for staging, storage, or equipment parking.

Project Completion & Long-Term Benefits

Q: What will Thornton Avenue look like when the project is complete?

When complete, Thornton Avenue will be transformed into a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly corridor featuring widened sidewalks and bulb-outs, protected Class II bike lanes, new street trees and landscaping, decorative paving and crosswalks, pedestrian-scale lighting, and new street furniture including benches and bike racks. The result will be a safer, more attractive, and more economically active main street for Old Town Newark.

Q: How will this project benefit local businesses long-term?

Streetscape improvements are proven to increase foot traffic, dwell time, and retail sales along improved corridors. The creation of a walkable, attractive environment is expected to support existing businesses and attract new investment to Old Town Newark. The project is a central component of the City's strategy to make Old Town a regional destination.

Q: Where can I get more information or stay updated on the project?

For more information, visit the Old Town Newark Specific Plan page on the City of Newark's website at newarkca.gov. Project updates and construction notices will also be provided through the City's communication channels. For direct inquiries, contact the City of Newark Community Development Department.