



Minister Without Portfolio in the Ministry of Economy Growth and Job Creation, Everal Warmington (right)sought to get information from NWA's Parish Manager David Clarke (1st left) on a road in central Westmoreland. The Minister was on a tour of roads in the Western Parish. Also in picture are NWA Regional Manager Rober Francis (2nd left), Member of Parliament for Westmoreland Central, George Wright (3rd left).



Completed River Training Works at Orange River, St. Mary. The works were undertaken through a contract valued at \$3.1 -Million. It saw the construction of some 37 metres of Gabion protective wall reinforced with geotextile fabric as part of the works to protect the community from Orange River, especially when in spate.



Tropical Storm Elsa:
Minimal but Costly
Impact on
Infrastructure
p. 2

Traffic Calming Measures for
Negril, Westmoreland
p. 14

Althea Cole-Martin:
Telling it like it is...
p. 17

Tropical Storm Elsa: Minimal but Costly Impact on Infrastructure

By the morning of Saturday July 3, 2021, Jamaicans had already been monitoring and preparing for the impact of Tropical Storm Elsa from as far back as Tuesday. Many Jamaicans, not wanting to take a chance, went about their routine storm preparations of stocking up on food and supplies, moving to higher ground or fretting. There was still a small subset of the population that didn't believe that the storm was coming, so they went about life as usual, and then there were others who prepared by trying to 'pray away' the storm.

Over at National Works Agency's headquarters on Maxfield Avenue, preparations were already made for emergency responses and voluntary and mandated 'storm employees' were rostered to work, monitoring and recording road conditions to dispatch assistance as necessary. Weather experts had predicted that the storm would pass over the northeastern section of the country, and judging from the fact that Jamaica suffered massive damage from storms that did not hit us, in the past, everyone braced for the worst.



Saturday, for most of the country, was clear and sunny – so much so that persons reported going to the beach and doing their regular Saturday activities. The storm was expected to hit the country at 8 p.m. but in St. Catherine, up until 10 p.m. dominoes could be heard knocking in some communities. Persons who went to bed early missed the first drops of rain that started to pelt the island shortly before 11 p.m.

Tropical Storm Elsa visited throughout Saturday night into the early afternoon of Sunday, July 4, gifting us with gale force winds, torrential rainfalls in some areas, and audio-visual footage of extraordinary occurrences across the island. Eastern, southern and central parishes such as St. Thomas, St. Catherine and Clarendon seemed to be the most affected, and by mid-morning there were numerous reports of flooding, landslides, fallen trees, fallen rocks and damaged road surfaces in at least nine parishes.

By the time the storm moved to its next destination, much of the flood waters had receded, leaving behind roadways that were heavily silted, drains that were blocked and road surfaces that were scoured. Many breathed sighs of relief that the storm had passed and even more persons were grateful that the impact that was expected did not materialise in the manner that was experienced during past storms.

Continued on page 3

COVID 19 and Connectivity ... continued from page 16

Mike explains that under phase two of the plan, the Government will explore partnerships with local TV operators through the Jamaica Association of Community Operators (JACCO) to provide last minute mile fiber connectivity to remote Government sites in each parish. These Government sites include those experiencing unreliable internet and data services. The final agreements including the number and cost estimate for last minute fiber connectivity service is to be informed by the completion of a number of last mile fiber proof of concept projects.

The Government is to also explore a partnership with the local licensed Wireless Internet Service Providers (WISP) to provide last mile wireless communication links to remote Government sites in each Parish. These Government sites to include those sites experiencing unreliable internet and data services and those sites with no internet or data services.

The final agreements including the number of sites and cost estimates for last mile wireless connectivity service is to be informed by the completion of a number of last mile wireless connectivity Proof of Concept projects. Government sites located within or in close proximity to a wireless Internet Service Provider tower can cost effectively provide last mile fixed wireless connectivity under the joint agreements.

FUNDING SOURCE:

The funding for the various elements of the Plan for phases 1 and 2 have not been clearly identified but is under active discussions. A number of funding sources have been discussed and considered but no definitive decision have been taken as to the amount to be allocated and the funding sources. Funding consideration is to include funding for the initial procurement and installation of equipment as well as funding for the ongoing maintenance of the COVID 19 Emergency Communication Backbone.

WORKS IN PROGRESS:

The NWA along with a number of Community Cable TV networks and East-West Toll Road have started the splicing and termination of backbone fiber optic cables. Upon completion, direct fiber connectivity will be available to the parishes of Portland, St. Thomas, St. Catherine, Clarendon, Manchester, St. Elizabeth, Westmoreland and St. James. Discussions on the availability of dark fiber strands are ongoing between the NWA, Digicel, FLOW and the North/South Toll Road management. It is anticipated that the fiber optic cable splicing and termination works for the aforementioned Parishes will be completed by early 2021.

FIBER OPTIC TRANSMISSION AND NETWORKING EQUIPMENT

Upon completion of the termination and testing of the fiber optic cable links between Parishes, the next step requires the installation of fiber optic transmission and networking equipment at each Municipal Corporation. These equipment are required to activate the dark fibers strands to enable data transport across Parishes.

A recent assessment of the impact of Covid 19 on Jamaican children by UNICEF, indicated that the degree of supervision for online education in household was below 50%. It was also identified that there is also a large percentage of households in which children do not have exclusive access to a device for educational purposes, coupled with the inability of internet service providers to supply a consistent strong and reliable bandwidth.

The Ministry of Health (MOH) which is the principal frontline responder has also experienced major challenges getting its medical advisories and contact tracing activities into rural and inner city communities, due mainly to the lack of access to internet and broadband services. The need to monitor visitors and returning citizens at port of entry and the demand of more health facilities to treat with mitigating the spread of COVID 19 will require access to high speed connectivity to support certain health related technologies to ensure the monitoring and management of the virus.

"The need to use ICT to collect data (contact tracing) and keep a frightened nation informed through social media, local media via internet connectivity and to facilitate the continued education of our children cannot be overstated." Mike said.

A dedicated robust communication infrastructure which compliments Government existing private telecom services is urgently needed to assist the Government's rebuilding efforts during and after the COVID pandemic. It is a matter of life and death for Jamaicans and visitors alike to have confidence in the Government's capacity to manage and mitigate the effect of COVID and any and all other threats to national security.

With these bold initiatives set out by the Government and the diligence and unwavering commitment of "Mike", and his Team of dedicated professionals it is our hope and prayer that they take us safely into 2022 and beyond!

Althea Cole-Martin: Telling it as is for Twenty Years the Journey ... continued from page 17

expounded. She then vividly recalled how former colleague, Kadine Houston, aided her by sharing guidelines for meeting planning. With their guidance and encouragement, Althea successfully organized and recorded the first meeting. This meeting is deemed the fondest in memory on her professional life, given the impact it had at the beginning of her career

Enthralled by the planning process, she was inspired to further explore secretarial duties. Her blossoming appreciation led her to Duff's Business College, where she earned a Diploma in Secretarial Studies. She then obtained a Certified Professional Secretary designation at the B&B Institute of Business. Additionally, she earned certification in Typing through a six (6) week course at Fitz Henley Typing School.

There is more assertiveness in Althea's approach to her duties, as two decades of service have fortified her character. She has opted to approach the difficulties attached to her job with admirable stoicism. "I don't consider what is easy or what is hard about my job," she asserted. Instead, she "tackles the challenges and tries to conquer all the opportunities" that come her way. The unique quality that she brings to her job is her ability to skillfully interact with internal and external audiences. She relates to staff from a place of camaraderie and meets customers at their level. Her equanimity proves to be her strongest quality. She is not one to crumble under the weight of her duties. Repeatedly, she has demonstrated her tenacity by staying consistent in wavering circumstances. Her proudest contribution to NWA is organizing the distribution of shirts to over 400 staff members for the agency's 5th, 10th, 15th and 20th anniversaries.

Althea's 20 years of service fostered no regrets. When asked, she stated that there is nothing that she would change about her approach to her occupation. She is, however, grateful for the patience that she has developed while working at the NWA. Prayer is vital to her work life. She highlighted that it has helped her to remain grounded, balanced and motivated over the years. She further references her connection to God by stating that "the Creator has been most helpful to me during my career". Additionally, she expresses gratitude to the "friends along the way". The satisfaction that comes with assisting, planning and organizing has been the most

rewarding aspect of her job as Administrative Assistant. She encourages those who she mentors to "ensure that they find a career path that they enjoy and are good at."

BEYOND THE JOB

Althea's distinctive personality is underscored by her arsenal of comical comebacks and witty one-liners. One of her personal qualities that she appreciates the most is her honesty. Indeed, her face will display whatever words she has decided to withhold. If prompted further, she would have probably attributed this to the fact that she is a "Leo". When asked about her least favourite quality, she chuckled before responding, "the miserableness, and I have no intention of changing it". In keeping with her blunt yet high-spirited disposition, she encouraged the interviewer to "go and ask them" when asked what three misconceptions others may have about her.

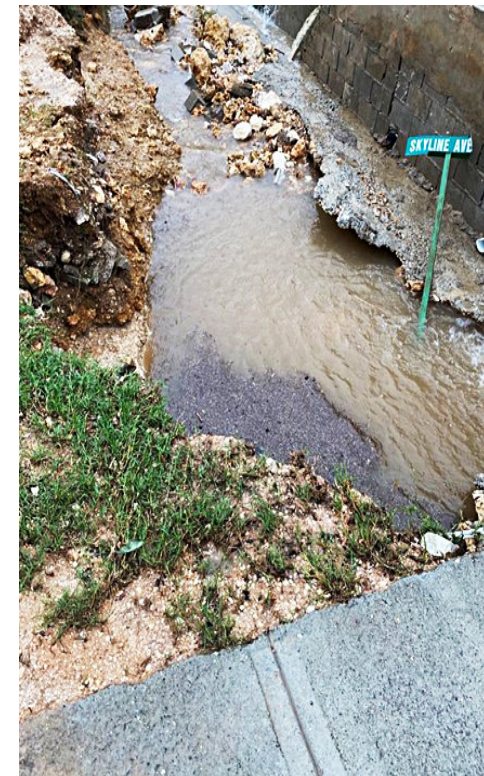
Her vibrant and ever-flowing energy pushes her to find various channels for her skills and creativity. Her industrious nature extends beyond her work life, landing in various organizations. Althea is a part of the Jamaica Association of Administrative Professionals, where she occupies the position of Public Relations Officer on the National Executive. She serves as the Secretary on the Executive of the St. Hugh's High School Parent Teachers' Association (PTA), is a member of the St. Hugh's High School Past Student Association and is on the Supervisory Committee of the PWD Coop Credit Union Limited. She disclosed that all of this is "very tiring but rewarding".

Not many people may know that Althea sews, specializing in drapery. She listed this as one of her hobbies alongside cooking, reading and listening to music. Besides "Leo Season", Althea thoroughly enjoys basking in the festivities of Christmas time. Annually, she counts down the days left until Christmas Day as early as June. The universal joy associated with the holiday season fills her with excitement. Watching movies and catching up on rest are two ways in which she unwinds. Her family is her main source of inspiration in life. She expressed gratitude for her three children, emphasizing that they keep her going. Her unswerving boldness is apparent in the way she confronts life. She goes by the mantra that "every day is an adventure to be embarked on".

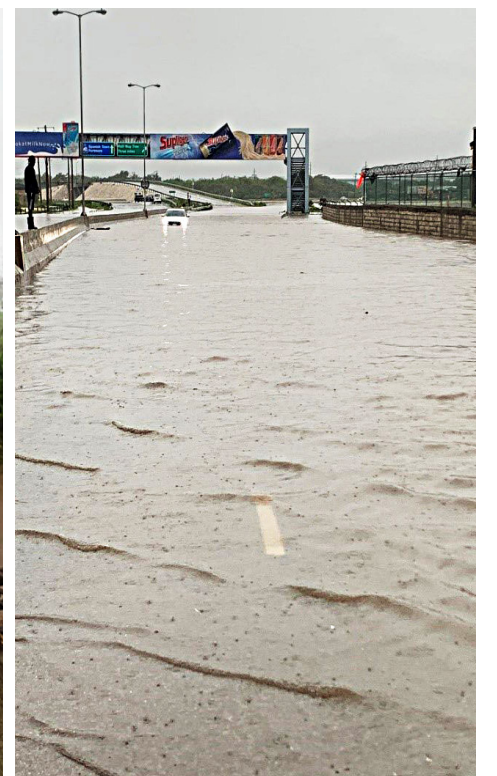
Tropical Storm Elsa: Not Much Impact but Still Millions of Dollars' Worth of Damage to Infrastructure ... continued from page 2

A lot of this could be attributed to the fact that, prior to the storm, flood mitigation drain cleaning was underway in all constituencies. This contributed to the easy run-off of the storm water shortly after the rains halted as many critical drains were addressed before Elsa came. There were other areas where the flooding appeared to be overwhelming during the storm, such as sections of Old Harbour and its environs. This too did not last for long after the rains ceased.

In fact, within 24 hours response teams were able to do more thorough assessments of roadways, identifying areas that were most adversely affected. Over 90% of affected roadways were restored, even temporarily, within 48 hours which is something that has not often happened in the past. Of course, long term restoration will be needed to address all the issues that were associated with the storm. Although, at first glance, the impact of Tropical Storm Elsa is not as great as was the case in the past, the fiscal damage is estimated to be in excess of \$800 million dollars.



Flooded roadways and damaged gully inverts



Flooded drainage and roadway at Marcus Garvey Drive



Heavily silted and flooded road in St. Thomas



Silt and debris on Marcus Garvey Drive after flood waters have receded

Whitney Turn to Clarendon Park in Clarendon Gets Long Awaited Attention

Residents and stakeholders of Porus, Whitney Turn, Clarendon Park, and their environs, are heaping praises on the recently completed rehabilitative road works along the Whitney Turn to Four Paths corridor.

"Thank God for the Taxi-men and their protest. The ride was awful, now it is like travelling on the Concorde," was the sentiment of Robert Baker, a returning resident. Similar sentiments were issued by other residents and stakeholders who spoke of the benefit of having such a project completed. The Whitney Turn to Clarendon Park is an important corridor linking Kingston with other major towns such as Mandeville and Savannah-la-mar on which thousands of motorists travel daily.

The National Works Agency started the project on Saturday May 8, 2021 and it was completed within the given six week's contract period. The intent was to undertake as much of the work as possible during the COVID-19 curfew hours on the weekend, as the roadway was narrow, in sections, and there would have been less traffic during those times. Single lane traffic was maintained and an alternative route for motorists travelling westerly from May Pen to Mandeville was implemented where they would turn left at Scott Pass, St. Toules travel to Redberry and continue to Mandeville.

The project was contracted to J&L Equipment and Construction Services at a cost of 35 million dollars. The scope of works included removal of existing road surface and soft spots, filling holes with engineering fill, base course and paving of the roadway with asphaltic concrete.

Since the rehabilitation, there has been no complaint of armed robberies due to slowing down and skipping potholes or any endless tales about excessive damage to vehicles. There has been less singing of Buju Banton anthem, "it is not an easy road". There is little or no comparison of historical days when Whitney's slaves had to use that track, now a road, to drive his Drays when carrying sugar from his nearby estate to the Port. Motorists from communities such as Scott Pass, St. Toules, Toll Gate, Osbourne Store and Porus are now comfortable with the new road surface when they travel in and out of their communities.



Commencement of work on a deplorable section of road surface



Completed section of the rehabilitated thoroughfare



Surface preparation for subsequent paving

Althea Cole-Martin: Telling it as it is for Twenty Years

THE JOURNEY

Perched at the very entrance of the Communication and Customer Service Department, Althea Cole-Martin greets colleagues with her sarcastic sense of humor, searing her words into the minds of all who interact with her. The Administrative Assistant, who is most beloved for her proclivity to tell the unaltered, uncoated truth (and to do so unabashedly), has served the National Works Agency (NWA) for the entirety of its existence. Her ability to inspire and make others feel seen softens the "no nonsense" approach that she takes, thus creating a charismatic individual that issues a lot of tough love.

Because of her aptitude for weaving words to encourage and entertain, one would be led to believe that she always intended to work in the field of Communication. However, Althea highlighted that this was not the case. Originally, she held a position at the Ministry of Transport and Works. A recommendation from a coworker would later bring her attention to the NWA. Taking the advice of her coworker, Althea applied to the newly founded organization. She was with NWA since its inception on April 1, 2001, when the Government of Jamaica accorded it Executive Agency status. She stated that "God had His plan for my life" as she reflected on the genesis of her journey.

Former Chief Executive Officer of the NWA, Ivan Anderson was a positive influence on Althea's career. Though she occupied the post of Telephone Operator, Mr. Anderson entrusted her with duties that would have been performed by the Administrative Assistant. "Mr. Anderson asked me to arrange the first meeting with the NWA directors. After explaining that I was just a Telephone Operator, he just explained what I needed to do," she



COVID 19 and Connectivity ... continued from page 15

ICT infrastructure are required to address the deficiencies in how Government agencies communicate with each other and with the general public.

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE 100 DAY ICT ACTION PLAN ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Provide high speed data connectivity between all Municipal Corporations.
- Enable connectivity to Cable TV and Public Broadcasting Corporation.
- Expand Public Wi-Fi Hotspots in rural communities
- Enable Internet access to schools without Internet service
- Provide connectivity to Airports, Ports, Hospitals and Police Stations
- Support implementation of ongoing major public sector ICT projects.

The Government through consultation with the National Broadband Task Force and the National Information Communication and Technology Advisory Committee has started the implementation of the following actions:

Extend Government communication system (fiber and microwave network) outside of the Kingston Metropolitan Area to other Parishes. The extension of the fiber optic cable infrastructure is being done in partnership with members of the Cable TV industry and Toll Road Authority. The partnership involves the use of Fiber Sharing and Exchange Agreements to enable the Government, obtaining at no cost, access to dark fiber strands to provide connectivity to all parishes.

This is the point at which opportunity meets preparedness as Mike's dream and readiness collide with the government's COVID 19 100 Day ICT Action Plan. The government's 100 Day ICT Action Plan with its mandate of island wide ICT connectivity is the silver lining behind the dark cloud of Covid 19 and the realization of Mike's dream.

The consummate professional that he is, the Computer Maintenance graduate visions a Jamaica with first world ICT technologies and connectivity to rival any developed country.

MICROWAVE NETWORK UPGRADE:

Though the NWA has been at the forefront of rolling out a fiber optic network as part of its Public Safety Network, it has also sought to utilize microwave links. Mike explains that this is necessary as a reasonable backup to certain acts of nature or deliberate action by individuals who may vandalise



Fibre Optic Cables being laid at the Manchester Municipal Corporation the fiber network.

"Improvements to the Government's communication infrastructure requires major upgrading of microwave network. In the event of major fiber optic cable damage there must be other means of maintaining high speed communication to all Parishes. In addition, increasing the capacity of the Microwave backbone enables wireless connectivity to remote Government sites such as schools, police stations, public Wi-Fi Hotspots and community centers in each parish."

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN:

The 100 Day ICT Action Plan is divided into two distinct implementation phases. Phase one will focus on the completion of the national communication backbone, including extending the GovNet fiber optic cable infrastructure to all parishes, installation of fiber optic transmission equipment and upgrading the Microwave Backbone to provide network redundancy. Is this in action now?

Continued on page 19

The Palmer's Cross Main Road Clarendon-Mission Accomplished

For residents of Palmer's Cross and its environs in Clarendon, the traverse to their homes and businesses has been a difficult one due to the poor road conditions which existed for years. The condition on the roadway has progressively deteriorated over time, leaving many residents frustrated with the conditions with which they were facing. Over the years, there have been several demonstrations over the flooded road surface and potholes caused by several blocked drains.

The National Works Agency started work, on the corridor, on March 11, 2020, and the duration of the project was scheduled for four months. The project was contracted to Chin's Equipment Rentals and Construction Company Limited at a cost of over 27 million dollars. The scope of works included the cutting of overhanging trees, bushing, cleaning of earth drains and side drains, scarifying, preparation of formation, application of base course, and asphaltic concrete overlay.

The project came to a halt two months into the contract on May 11, 2020. During the preparation of the formation

stage of the work, the contractor encountered multiple damaged water distribution lines and they were unable to proceed with carrying out the scope of works. This lead to the intervention of the National Water Commission (NWC) who gave the contract to Chins Equipment to repair the derelict water supply and distribution system.

The scope of works for this additional project included the excavation of 6 km of pipeline trench in the roadway, the installation of 3 km of 6 inch PVC pipes, hydrants interconnections and laterals, compaction and asphaltic concrete reinstatement of the roadway. This new task of pipe laying commenced on June 8, 2020.

On April 13, 2021, the NWC indicated that the pipeline related works were completed along with pressure testing. The installation of the valve boxes were now outstanding as well as road reinstatement.

On Monday May 10, 2021 a community meeting was held at Palmer's Cross Square where Member of Parliament Parnell Charles Jr. stated that the project needed to be completed quickly in order to facilitate the community with potable water and a better road surface. The rehabilitative work on the Palmer's Cross Main Road restarted on Friday May 14, 2021 with a new duration of two months. The contractor had to now refocus on the base layer of the road before applying the asphaltic concrete surface.

The contractor, at the community meeting, made the commitment to sprinkle the road twice per day as the citizens were complaining about the thick cloud of dust during the laying of the pipelines and the fear of the spread of COVID-19 with little water in the pipeline. The project at the start of July 2021 is 95% completed and the citizens were celebrating that the fundamental environmental issues no longer exist. The communities impacted by the rehabilitative works were Freetown, Savannah Cross, Chateaux and Four Paths.



Asphaltic concrete overlay at Palmer's Cross

Smooth Sailing along the Barberry Hall to Pedro Cross Main Road in St. Elizabeth

After much waiting, threats of demonstration and persistent lobbying, work was completed on the Barberry Hall to Pedro Cross Main Road in South West St. Elizabeth. This corridor has been in a deplorable condition for some time, with several deep potholes especially in the vicinity of the Newell High School, and the Watchwell cross road. This stretch of road is very important since it takes traffic from the central region of the parish to the Southern areas such as Treasure Beach and Junction.

The contract for the work was signed on November 12, 2020 and was funded by the Recurrent Maintenance of Secondary Roads 2020/2021 programme. The project was contracted to Chins Equipment Rentals and Construction at a cost of \$37,984,750 and scheduled to be completed within six months.

The scope of works included the bushing and trimming of overhanging trees, the cleaning of existing drains, the construction of v-drains, reshaping of the roadway, and the strengthening of the road base with the application of asphaltic concrete overlay.

Mr. Merrek Ebanks, a retired teacher stated that the corridor was vital to the economic future of the many persons in the area, especially as it is used for movement of farming products across the island. The road allows access to the growing community of Treasure Beach as well as leading tourism attractions such as Jamaica Zoo, Holland Bamboo, YS Falls, the Black River Safari, Jakes and the Appleton Estate.

Ms. Roselet Robinson, a business woman and Justice of the Peace stated that she was pleased with the high level of courtesies among the members of the community towards the project. The rehabilitative work, has especially enhanced the entrance of the school, where the students no longer have to worry about being splashed by the water that used to settle in the potholes or the dust nuisance which are now matters of the past. The work was completed on May 7, 2021.



Applying Prime coat in preparation for paving



Lane of paving to facilitate movement of traffic



Poor road condition before the start of the project

COVID 19 and Connectivity-Turning a disaster into triumph in NWA's thrust towards a modern Public Safety Network

COVID 19 has proved to be both a disaster and blessing and, as the saying goes, "behind every dark cloud there is a silver lining." As the dark cloud of Covid 19 looms menacingly, crippling every aspect and facet of our existence the challenge is to "get back to normal." The National Works Agency (NWA) is playing a major role in assisting with this normalcy.

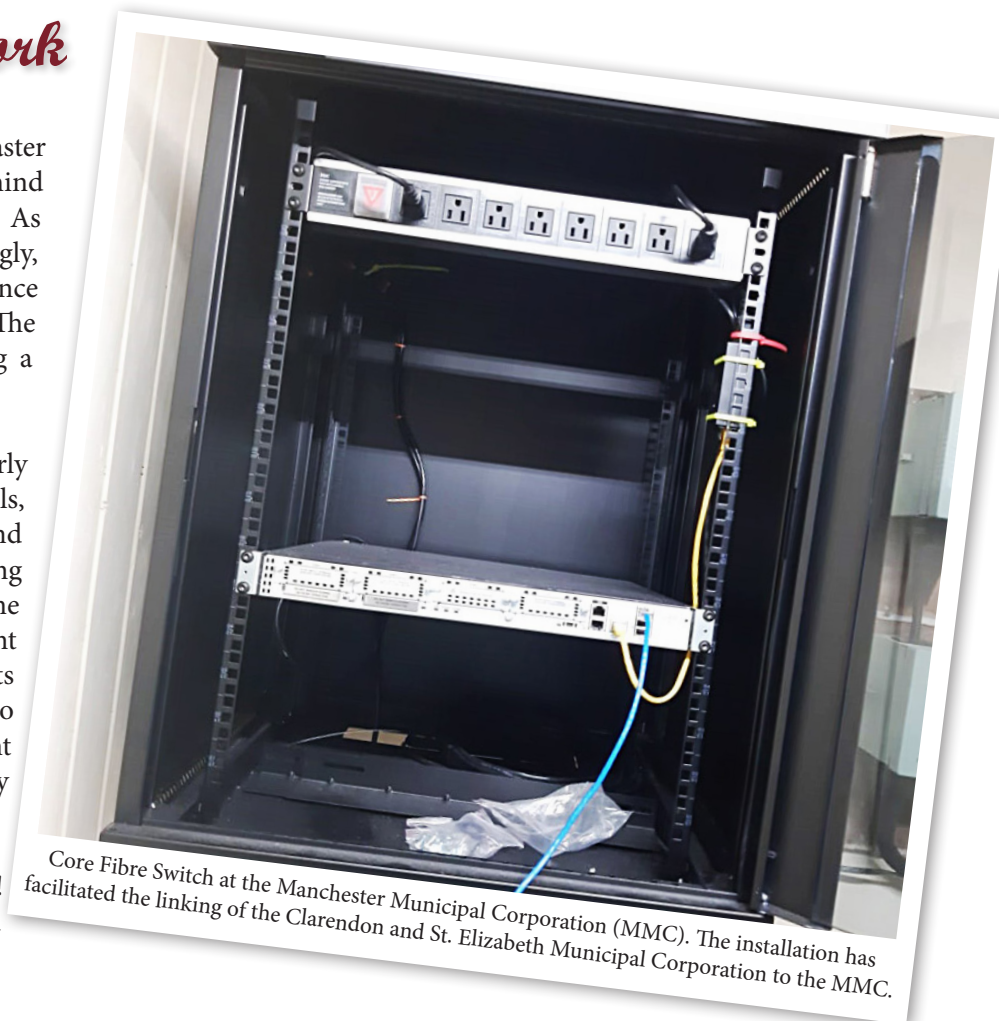
With curfew restrictions imposed in early 2020 and the mandatory closure of schools, the disruption of the health, tourism and education sectors has seen the country coming to a nervous standstill. The closure of nine hundred and eighty public schools meant that over six hundred thousand students were staying home with little or no access to internet to acquire online educational content that some schools were able to provide. Many students were being left behind!

The government had to act and do so swiftly! Thankfully, the country though unprepared in some respects had something with which to work, as the NWA had, over the last decade and half, been quietly working to build out an ICT infrastructure, mainly to connect the hundreds of signalized intersections already on the ground and those to come. The infrastructure though had greater benefits as part of a Public Safety Network.

At the fore front of this initiative is the hard working visionary and pioneer Michael Saunderson affectionately called "Mike". "Cometh the hour cometh the man." The STATHS graduate, who has been with the NWA since its inception, has nurtured a dream of island wide internet connectivity and in his pursuit to achieve this he has overseen the build out of connectivity in the Kingston Metropolitan Region (Kingston, Portmore and Spanish Town).

Over the many years of his tenure at the NWA he had tried relentlessly and tirelessly to achieve his dream. His efforts, though many, were often thwarted by the enormous capital expenditure required to outlay the entire island with fiber optic cables critical to the ICT infrastructure due to the Government's lack of resource. Mike however, still soldiered on. In the process, he gave new meaning to the old Jamaican proverb – "one one coco full basket." In this case one strand of fiber/duct space will help to build the network.

The government of Jamaica in its response to the COVID 19 pandemic announced in parliament on December 17, 2020 its 100 Day ICT Action Plan to combat the effects of the virus. "The "Government's 100 Day ICT Action Plan is grounded in the reality that the COVID pandemic's impact will last for many years and as such, major improvements in the public sector



Core Fibre Switch at the Manchester Municipal Corporation (MMC). The installation has facilitated the linking of the Clarendon and St. Elizabeth Municipal Corporation to the MMC.

Traffic Calming Measures for Negril, Westmoreland

Amid concerns regarding excessive speeds along the Norman Manley Boulevard in Negril, Westmoreland, the NWA has instituted a number of traffic calming measures along the Boulevard. The project was completed over a period of four days in July, 2021.

The Norman Manley Boulevard is a 4.9 km stretch of roadway located in the heart of Negril's tourism district and is home to a number of hotels and entertainment venues. Speeding along this corridor has resulted in numerous accidents and the loss of life. It is against this background that the NWA has over time instituted a number of road safety measures along this corridor. Among the interventions which have been completed by the NWA are a 4km multi-use pathway which separates pedestrian traffic from vehicular traffic; the installation of pedestrian actuated traffic signals, medians and pedestrian crossings.

Continuing in this vein, the NWA in July, re-marked sections of the roadway and also installed a number of Rumble Strips in the vicinity of pedestrian crossings, located along the corridor. Rumble Strips are a series of small continuous Raised Pavement Markers, which are installed along roadways in such a way that results in noise and vibration, being produced whenever tyres come into contact with it. The project also included road remarking.

The project targeted the section of the roadway between the Traveller's Beach Resort and the Azul Beach Resort.



An NWA road marking team, led by Traffic Supervisor, Judy-Kaye Grant (centre), re-mark a pedestrian crossing along a section of the Norman Manley Boulevard in Negril, Westmoreland.



An NWA team installs Rumble Strips along a section of the Norman Manley Boulevard.

Lafe Avenue/Golburn Lane in Old Harbour Being Rehabilitated in Preparation for Traffic Management Overhaul

For as long as can be remembered, Old Harbour in St. Catherine has been an area known for traffic congestion. Many solutions have been implemented over the years, the most prominent of which was the Old Harbour Bypass, now known as part of the East/West toll road. With all of these solutions, however, traffic in the town and environs of Old Harbour still remains a challenge for persons who have to use that area.

This can easily be attributed to the many housing developments, as well as other developments within the town. Another possible reason is the fact that the roadway, in most places, is only two lanes. Whatever the cause, it is easily agreed that a comprehensive and functional traffic management solution is needed to make the issue of congestion a distant memory.

As the National Works Agency (NWA) prepares to tackle the issue of traffic in the township of Old Harbour, the Agency has moved to undertake the rehabilitation of Lafe Avenue and Golburn Lane in the area. The roadways, which join Old Harbour Road and South Street, are often used by motorists to bypass traffic snarls in Old Harbour Square. The works are also critical as it will be directly beneficial to the Portmore Community College, Old Harbour High School and several business entities in the area, making it a highly trafficked area when schools are in session.

The rehabilitation got underway in the first week of July 2021 and is scheduled to last for four months. In addition to pavement repair works, there will be drainage improvement. This includes the cleaning and construction of drainage facilities, the raising of manholes and installation of mild steel gratings, head wall construction, sidewalk construction and erection of road signs.

Once the works are completed, it is expected that this will aid in the movement of traffic within and around Old Harbour Square. Additional traffic management solutions are being considered to include the conversion of roadways to one way, signalisation and road markings. These additional solutions will not be a part of the project in progress. However it is expected that upon completion, there will be more opportunities for further assessment and improvements in the traffic situation of Old Harbour.



A section of Lafe Avenue prepared for rehabilitation



A section of Lafe Avenue prepared for rehabilitation

NWA Rekindles Partnership with NHT for Cooreville Gardens Rehabilitation

The National Works Agency (NWA) is currently working in collaboration with the National Housing Trust (NHT) to rehabilitate roadways in the community of Cooreville Gardens in St. Andrew. This kind of partnership is not uncommon as the NWA has worked with the NHT, from time to time over the years, to not only fix roadways but to do river training works and even to install a traffic signal.

In the last few years, both agencies have collaborated on several projects. In November 2017, NHT funded the installation of the traffic signal at the intersection of Free Town and Salt River Road in Clarendon. The traffic light has since proven to be quite beneficial to all motorists who traverse that area, especially to the residents of several NHT housing developments in the area. It is also expected that with this controlled traffic management solution, there will be added opportunities for investments in the surrounding communities.

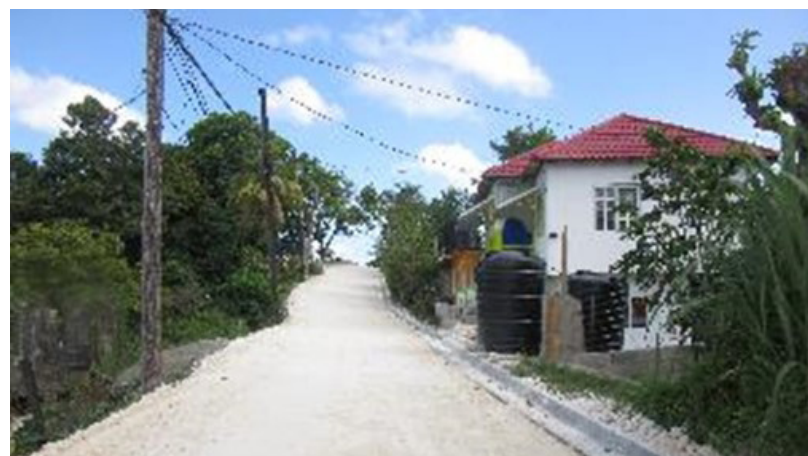
Between 2018 and early this year, the parish of Portland has benefitted, at least twice, from the NWA/NHT partnership. The Woodstock Housing Development in Buff Bay profited from river training works, undertaken in July 2018. The aim was to curb the erosion of the river banks of the river that ran behind the scheme and which threatened houses in close proximity. Since the works were done the problem appears to have been curtailed.

It was almost commonplace, therefore, when in February of this year the NHT once again chose to work collaboratively with NWA to rehabilitate the roadway from John Town to Anchovy in Portland. The roadway which is a housing scheme road also benefitted from the construction of a concrete U-drain.

This most recent collaboration (in St. Andrew) is unique in that it is the most extensive in recent years. In fact, the scope is so comprehensive that it is being undertaken in seven (7) packages and will see rehabilitative works undertaken along twenty-five (25) roadways and pathways within the



River Training works that were undertaken in the Woodstock housing scheme in Buff Bay, Portland



Base works along the John Town to Anchovy scheme road in Portland



Drainage construction being done as part of John Town to Anchovy project.

Continued on page 9



A map showing the limits of the Arthur Wint Drive project and its critical environs.

Access to Independence Park, which is home to both the National Stadium and its upcoming compliment, the National Sports Museum, will be improved by its relocation and inclusion into the signal at the Roosevelt Avenue intersection.

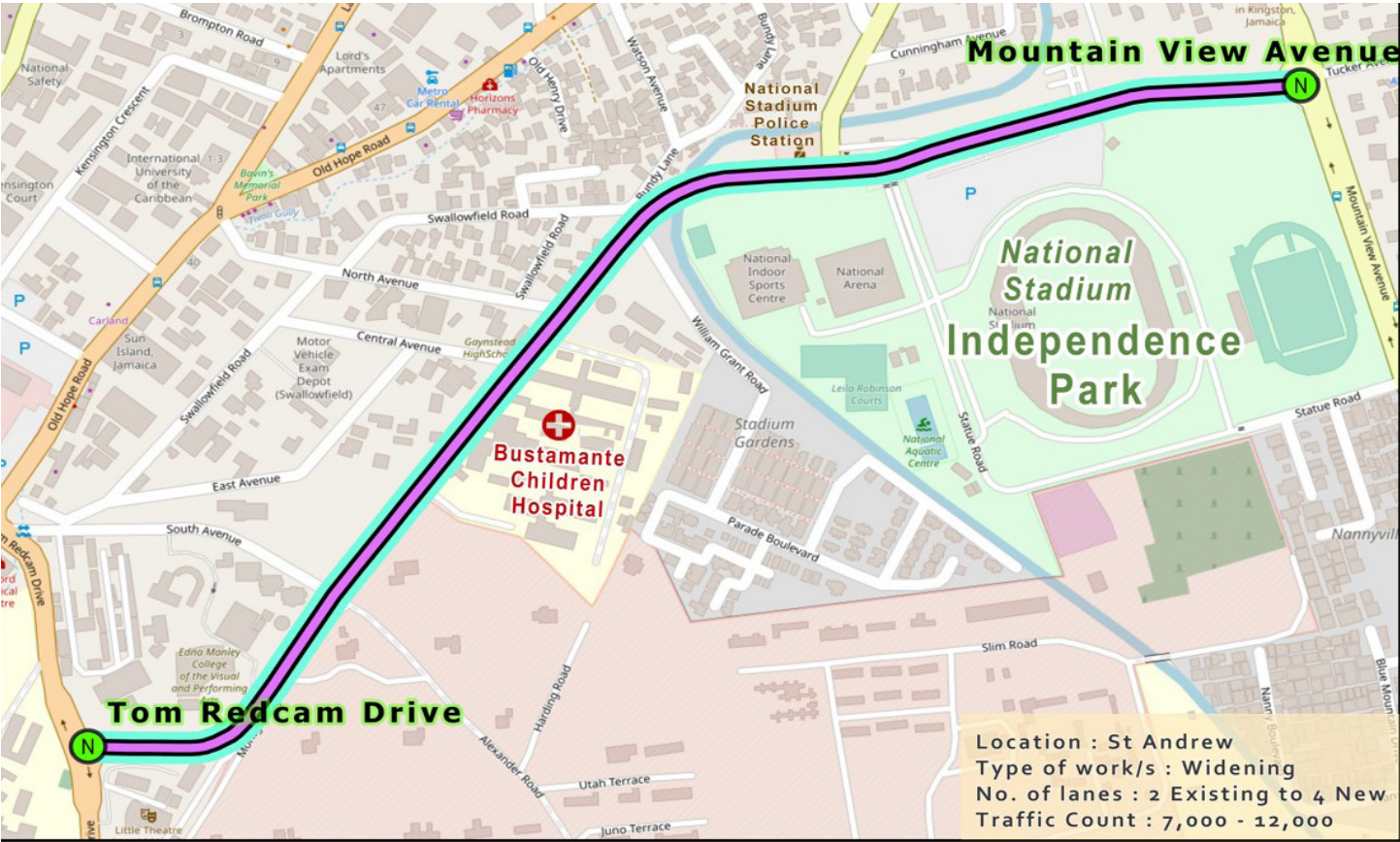
Installation of new traffic signals with pedestrian facilities for access to the Lofts Apartments, North Avenue, South Avenue and The Bustamante Hospital for Children are also a part of this upgrade.

The upgrade will not be limited to vehicular and pedestrian movement but will see improvements to the National Water Commission's supply network, The Jamaica Public Service's electricity grid and the installation of Fiber Optic ducts for future connection to the telecommunications super highway.

The area surrounding the stadium complex has recently seen an increase in real estate expansion due to the development of nearby upscale properties, thus becoming a prime place for residence for the "affluent. These include, The Stanton's, The Fairways and the The Lofts situated adjacent to the national stadium. This facelift and infrastructural development will have a positive social and economic impact on the area and its continued development.

The benefits to be derived from this, and other proposed projects under the Capital Expenditure (CAPEX) facility, cannot be calculated on a mere financial return on investment. The benefits will be derived for generations to come as the works that are now to be undertaken are being developed on those done over fifty years ago.

Arthur Wint Drive (Stadium Road) to be rehabilitated as part of Capital Expenditure (CAPEX) programme



A map showing the limits of the Arthur Wint Drive project and its critical environs.

In normal times, that is a time before COVID 19, who can remember going to an event at the National Stadium? The confusion, the congestion, the traffic along Arthur Wint Drive coming to a standstill and only moving at a snail's pace at long frustrating intervals.

These delays affect patients and staff of the Bustamante Hospital for Children who have to access the hospital's facility during these and other times during the weekday rush hour traffic. The threat of rain and the torrents of surface water that becomes 'Arthur Wint Gully', due to the lack of adequate storm water drains in the area to absorb it, is also of grave concern. Then there is the problem of insufficient lighting along the stretch posing safety challenges to both pedestrian and vehicular traffic alike. The myriad of challenges that present when using this well-travelled thoroughfare created a problem begging for a solution.

The National Works Agency (NWA), with a proven track record of delivering quality works coupled with its recent ISO 9001:2015 Certification, is well placed to provide the needed solution.

The solution will see the National Works Agency, with funding from the Capital Expenditure facility, invest millions of dollars to create a four lane thoroughfare with improved features. This reconstruction will greatly improve the commute to and from the Central Business District by opening up the corridor for increased traffic densities and development potential.

The project which is scheduled to last for twelve months will see the widening of Arthur Wint Drive from two to four lanes, from Mountain View Avenue to Tom Redcam Drive, with improved drainage features along the 1.6 km stretch.

NWA Rekindles Partnership with NHT for Cooreville Gardens Rehabilitation ... continued from page 8



Milling and base works being undertaken at Bob Marley Way in Cooreville Gardens

community. The general scope of the projects is the repair of the pavement, the installation of signs and minimal drainage improvement that includes the installation of manholes and mild steel gratings.

The community was plagued by severely deteriorated roadways and some amount of flooding during rainy times. The NWA's role in the partnership is to oversee the restoration of these roads to an optimal and functional state, and since the community does not fall under the usual purview of the Agency, which is responsible for main roads, NHT chose to partner with NWA for safe and reliable solutions.

Since the latter days of June, some roadways in Cooreville Gardens have already begun to benefit as part of this latest partnership. These are 1st to 4th Bob Marley Way and Bob Marley Circle. In coming weeks, residents and stakeholders of the community will see works being undertaken along Maytals Close, Maytals Crescent, Wailers Avenue, Wailers Drive, Wailers Terrace, Ernie Ranglin Road, Gaylads Avenue, Gaylads Circle, Ken Boothe Close, Mystic Circle, Mystic Mews, Ranny Close, Rita Pathway, Chosen Few Avenue, Paragon Close, Lois Kelly Path and Miss Lou Close.

Already residents of the Bob Marley Ways and Circle, though critical at first, because the project started "during the rainy season", have admitted that the improvements are welcomed and have renewed their

feelings of worth as taxpayers of this country. One resident, though new to the community, says she was worried that with Tropical Storm Elsa there would have been issues as a result of the works but she was pleasantly surprised and grateful that those fears were allayed.

It is expected that with these success stories in the past few years, not only will more communities benefit from the partnership between the two agencies, but the opportunities for developments and expansions will also be increased.



A backhoe clearing a section of roadway in Cooreville Gardens in preparation for surface reconstruction

Portmore ... Sunshine City ... Getting Much More than Sunshine

The Government of Jamaica, through the National Works Agency, will be undertaking two (2) major road rehabilitation projects in Portmore, St Catherine. The two corridors that will be getting this much needed attention are:

- Grange Lane to Madrid Avenue, which will include the Cumberland Gully Bridge
- Naggo Head via Braeton Main Road to Hellshire Main Road (up to East Mid Street)

The projects will be undertaken through a new capital works initiative dubbed the Capital Expenditure Programme (CAPEX) with a budget of just over two billion Jamaican dollars.

According to Major Projects Manager at the NWA, Sherwin Dennis, critical preliminary works are now being undertaken with a view to ensuring that once the procurement process is complete, the projects will move swiftly.

The scope of works for Grange Lane will include;

- Widening from two (2) to four (4) lanes to include turning lanes at the junctions; and
- The installation and improvement of storm water drainage systems that will see the installation of HDPE pipe culverts, inlets and kerbs and channels.

Mr. Dennis told the Roadster that the obvious benefits to the Portmore community include savings on fuel costs, resulting from less congestion and easier commute to go about their business. Other benefits to be derived from this major road expansion project are:

- Increased capacity to facilitate the upcoming Bernard Lodge Development Project, and
- Improved connectivity between Passage Fort Drive and Municipal Blvd, Portmore Town Centre, Bernard Lodge and Spanish Town.

The NWA is now in the final stages of awarding a consultancy for the finalisation of the design. The preliminary design has already been completed. Mr. Dennis noted that the NWA has started the land acquisition process with the assistance of the National Land Agency (NLA), who are project leads in respect of that part of the initiative. The works to be undertaken as



The proposed new design for the intersection of Braeton /Hellshire Main Roads

part of the Grange Lane Project are expected to be completed in eight (8) months.

The road between Naggo Head and Hellshire is said to be among the worst in terms of congestion levels in the Portmore Municipality. The CAPEX Programme is expected to significantly alter the now position for the better. Through this programme, a significant portion of the stretch will be upgraded from two (2) lanes to four (4) lanes. Two box culverts will also be widened and concrete U-drains constructed.

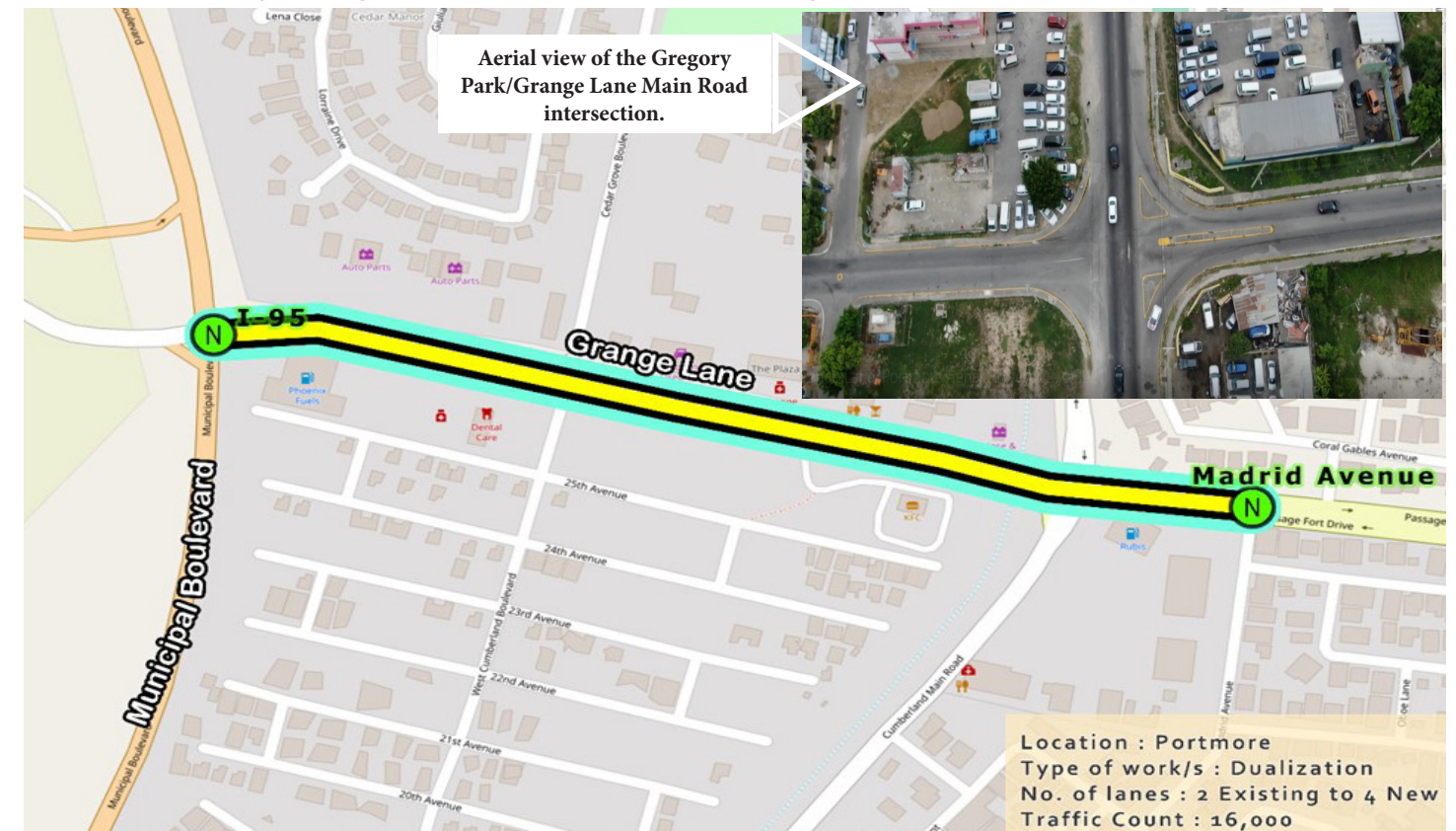
Mr. Dennis opines that this expansion will not only benefit the existing residents and business owners in Portmore, but will also give some fillip to planned developments. These developments are slated for Shooters Hill, Greater Bernard Lodge Development Project, Business Processing Outsourcing (BPO) ventures such a GTECH PARK, Pricesmart and other commercial entities.

This project is also in the final design stage. Construction is expected to last for one year and will be a continuation of the Port Henderson to Naggo Head Project which was completed under the Major Infrastructure Development Programme in 2019.

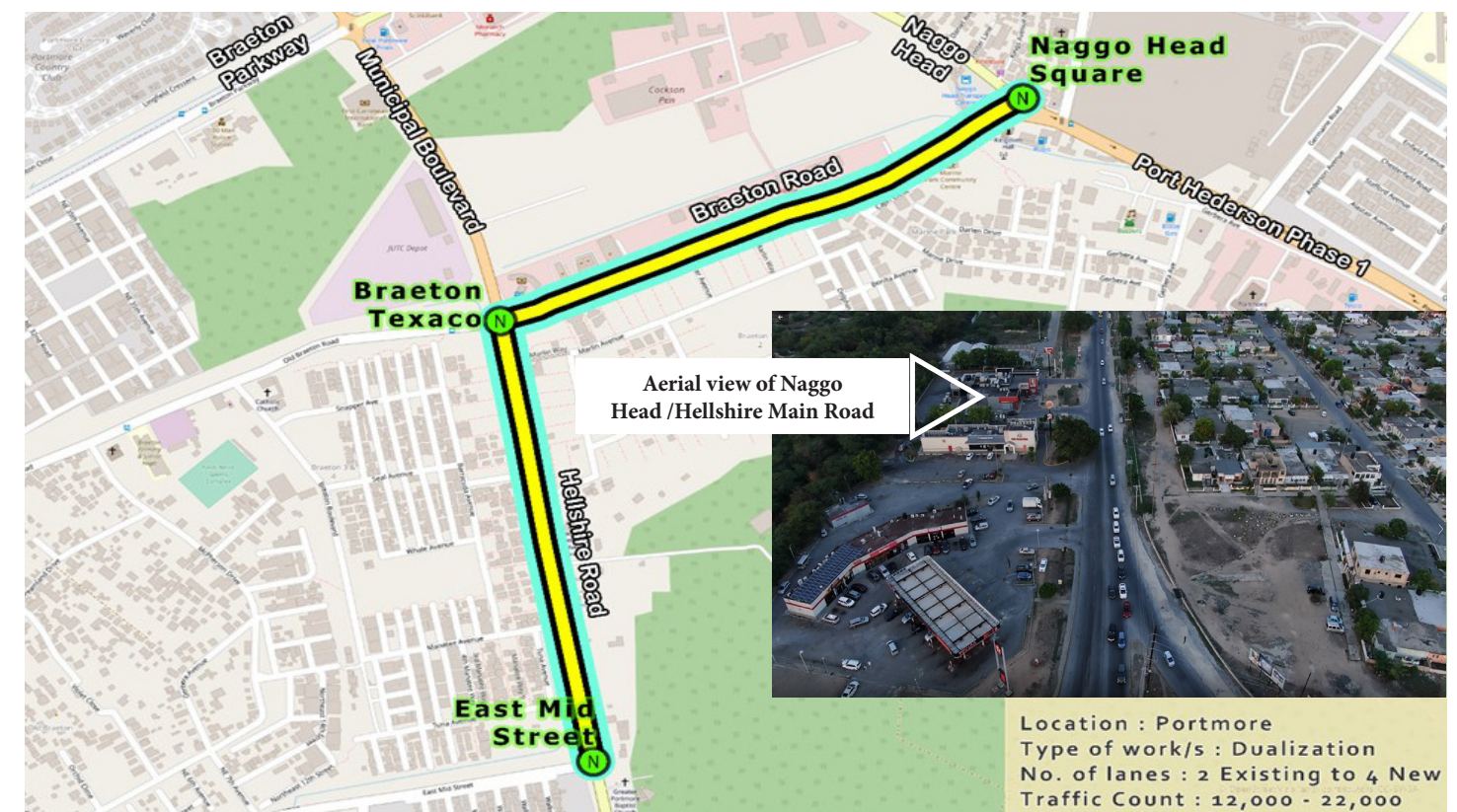
Among the features of both the Naggo Head and Grange Lane project are new traffic signals, sidewalks with facilities for the physically challenged and pedestrian crossings. In keeping with the government's new thrust, the projects will include upgrade in other key infrastructure, including water, sewerage and telecommunications.

Continued on page 11

Portmore ... Sunshine City ... Getting Much More than Sunshine... continued from page 10



Map showing the extent of the works to be undertaken under the Grange Lane Project



Map showing the extent of the works to be undertaken as part of the improvement works from Naggo Head to Hellshire, St. Catherine