

# NJ21st Investigates Berkeley Heights Storm Damage Assessment

Emergency Bond Spending in Berkeley Heights- Storm Recovery or Misplaced Priorities?

Laura Kapuscinski

[www.nj21st.com](http://www.nj21st.com)

CC BY-NC-SA 4.0



shining a light on local government

I visited the majority of specific addresses listed in the Township Storm Damage Assessment. Disappointment and utter confusion doesn't even begin to sum up my experience.

Of all the streets I drove on and walked on, only Park Avenue and Russo Place would fall under the category of "in dire repair." To be fair, I did not drive or walk down every single street in Berkeley Heights and I'm sure there is a ton of damage I missed.

After traveling 40+ miles around town by car and foot, I still don't understand the rhyme or reason to the majority of the proposed projects, the quotes for repair and how specific addresses were picked for driveway aprons and others were seemingly omitted or forgotten.

Neighbors and friends had massive amount of water rushing through their streets, their yards and their basements. That is a fact. It is my belief that the 3-million dollar emergency bond to make the repairs contained within the Townships Assessment report is not being used wisely or in a fiscally responsible manner. In short, I believe the 3 million dollars could have been put to better use or, at the very least - an assessment of every street in our Township with a rubric to designate priority repairs so residents could fully understand not only the magnitude of the damage but have a sense that the Township is taking steps to keep residents safe and but ensuring our roads and walkways are passable.

My research was based on the very specific house numbers and scope of work listed on the Township's Assessment Report. While several houses did not seem to have sustained noticeable damage, I found a slew of roads and driveway aprons that DID sustain massive damage. I also noticed multiple addresses listed that had already been repaired/patched and, in some cases, entire driveways that had been repaved presumably as a result of damage.

*Disclaimer: I am not an engineer nor do I pretend to know anything about roadways, cost of repairs or general road infrastructure outside of what I can see with my two eyes. To protect the privacy of our neighbors and friends, I have excluded house numbers in my report but have a record of each home and street visited.*

# Roads Visited

Russo Place

Park & Mountain Ave

Wentworth Drive

Wardle Avenue

Bristol Court

Balmoral Drive

Cambridge Drive

Evergreen Lane

Holly Glen Lane South

Spring Ridge Drive

Firehouse Driveway

Rogers Ave

Kingman Road

Circle View Avenue

Watchung Way

Dogwood Lane

Holly Glen Lane

\* MKM Exit

\* Springfield Avenue

\* Park Avenue

\* Princeton Avenue

\* Riverbend Road

\* Chaucer Drive

\* Cromwell Court

\* Forest Avenue

\* Deerpath

\* Hamilton Avenue

*\*a handful of streets that weren't included in the Township Assessment that sustained damage*

A number of roads in the Townships Assessment are single-lane, dead-ends with a handful of homes that are rarely used by the community. That is not to say they don't deserve repairs - they definitely do. It would have been easier to digest the whopping 3-million dollar budget had high-traffic areas been addressed first or some sort of explanation provided to how the Assessment was ultimately created.

I remain confused with what appears to be inconsistent estimates while reviewing assessed damage and proposed repairs. I was specifically concerned about the estimate of \$300,000+ to repair "wash out" on the rarely used Watchung Way access road for Runnels and Circle View. The road is what one would expect being a passage through a densely wooded area - it's not great, but it's not terrible.

I am frustrated beyond words that so much money is being spent on these repairs when there are several high-traffic areas in our township that need to be fixed for the safety of our residents.

With school starting in a few weeks why isn't anyone holding emergency meetings to ensure the roads and sidewalks are safe for our children?

And why, after one month, not a single mention of an estimated time of repair to the Park and Mountain Avenue intersection been addressed? Actually, why isn't this fixed yet?

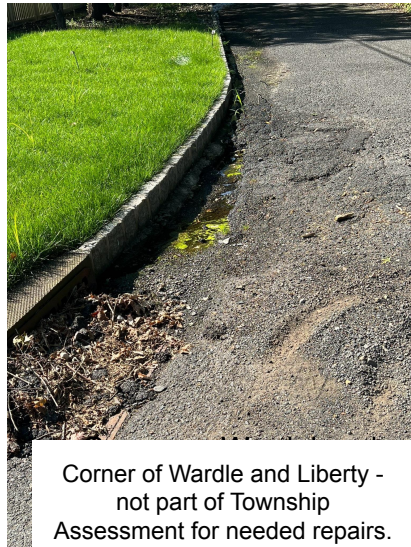
Accountability means putting your money where your mouth is and hitting the pavement, literally, if necessary.



Wardle



Wardle



Corner of Wardle and Liberty -  
not part of Township  
Assessment for needed repairs.

The proposed quote for 2 homes for  
“damaged/missing asphalt”

Wardle is **\$153,291.60.**

*Wardle Avenue is a dead-end road off Liberty Avenue.*



Kingman  
Road

The proposed quote for  
Kingman for “damaged  
asphalt/severe erosion  
including stone” is

**\$167,877.60.**

*Kingman Road is a dead-end street off  
Emerson lane.*



Dogwood



Dogwood

The proposed quotes to repair  
“damage to curblin and asphalt wash-out”  
by 3 homes on  
Dogwood Lane is **\$2,255** and **\$9,700**.

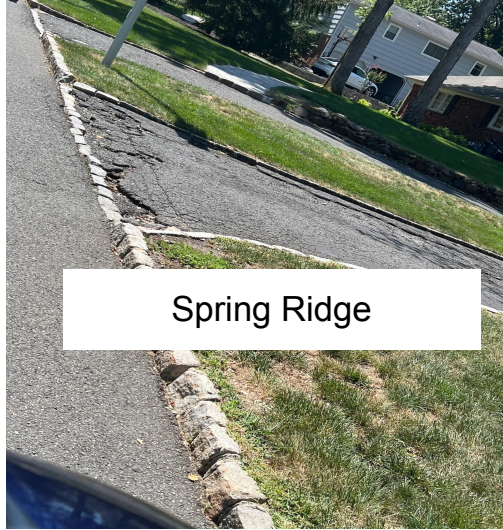
*Dogwood Lane is a residential road off Mountain Avenue.*



Firehouse Driveway

The proposed quotes to repair  
Firehouse Driveway is **\$3,390**  
and **\$6,750**.

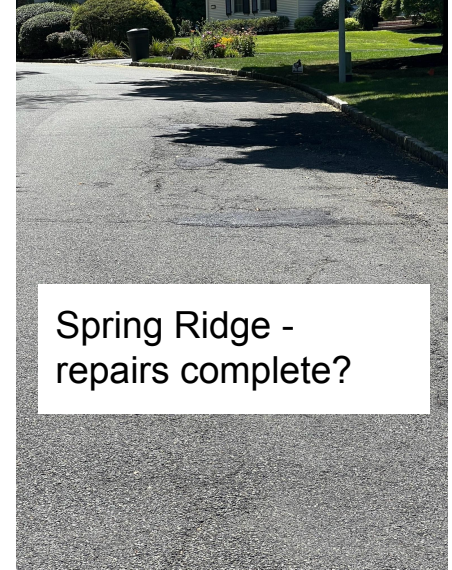
*The Firehouse Driveway is on Hamilton Avenue.*



Spring Ridge



Spring Ridge



Spring Ridge -  
repairs complete?

The proposed quote for 7 homes  
“damaged/missing asphalt” on Spring Ridge Drive  
is **\$538,942.80!!!**

*Spring Ridge Drive is a residential road off Snyder Avenue.*



Spring Ridge



Spring Ridge



Spring Ridge



Rogers Avenue



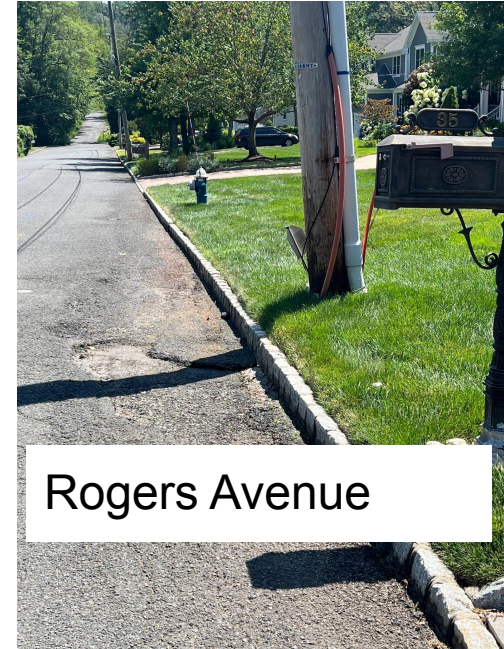
Rogers Avenue



Rogers Avenue

The proposed quote for  
“damaged/missing asphalt” by 5  
homes on Rogers Avenue is  
**\$282,519.60.**

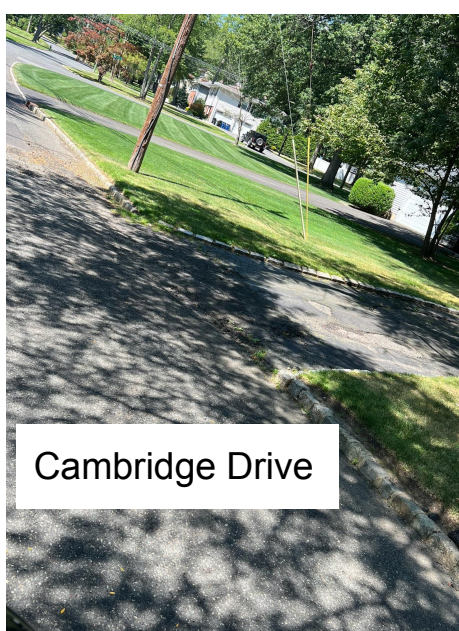
*Rogers Avenue is a dead-end street off Emerson Lane.*



Rogers Avenue



Cambridge Drive



Cambridge Drive



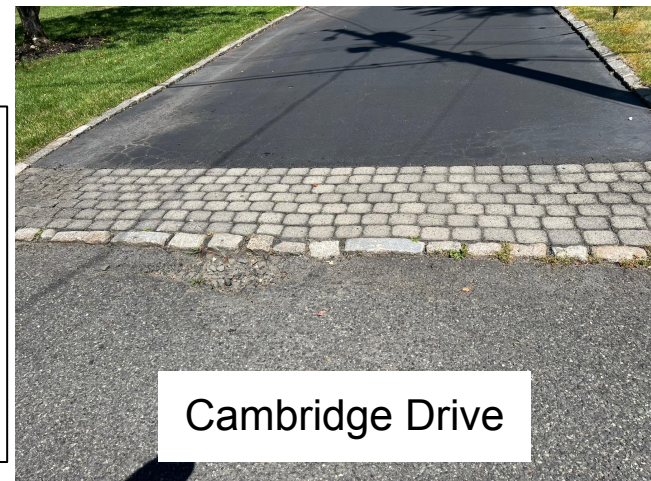
Cambridge Drive - no clear indication of damage sustained and/or repairs complete.



Cambridge Drive

The proposed quote for repair for “damaged/missing asphalt” at 5 addresses is **\$306,348.24.**

*Cambridge Drive is a dead end street off Mountain Avenue.*



Cambridge Drive



Bristol - unknown/not visible damages

The proposed estimate for  
“damaged/missing asphalt” on  
Bristol Court for 4 homes is  
**\$250,704.72**

*Bristol Court is a cul-de-sac located off Balmoral Drive.*

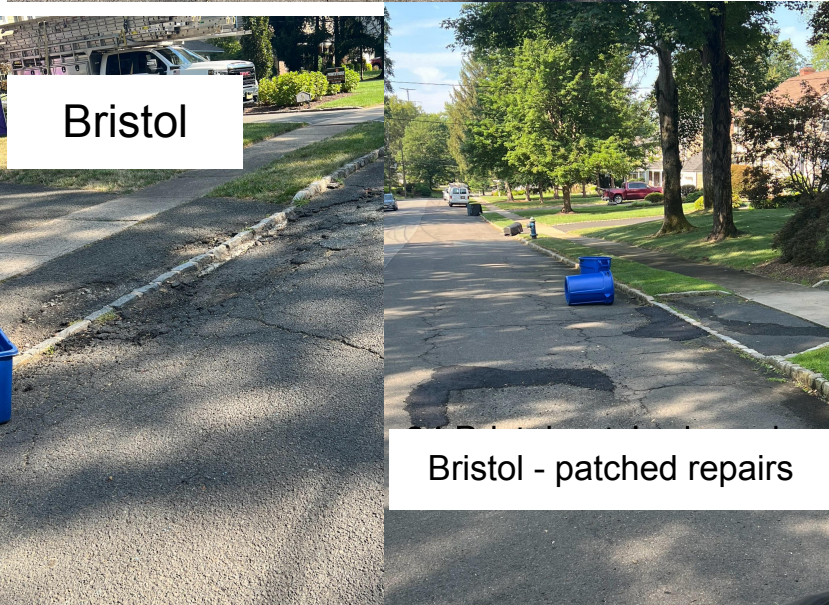


Balmoral - patched repairs



The proposed estimate to  
repair “damaged missing  
asphalt/lifted” to the 1  
home on Balmoral is  
**\$278,209.44**

*Balmoral Drive is a dead-end street located off Kline  
Boulevard.*



Bristol - patched repairs



Bristol - patched repairs



Wentworth



Wentworth



Wentworth

The estimated quote  
for “damaged/lifted  
asphalt at 15 homes  
on Wentworth Drive is

**\$445,254.72.**

*Wentworth Drive is a residential road  
located off Hillside Avenue.*



Wentworth



Wentworth



Wentworth



Circle View



Circle View



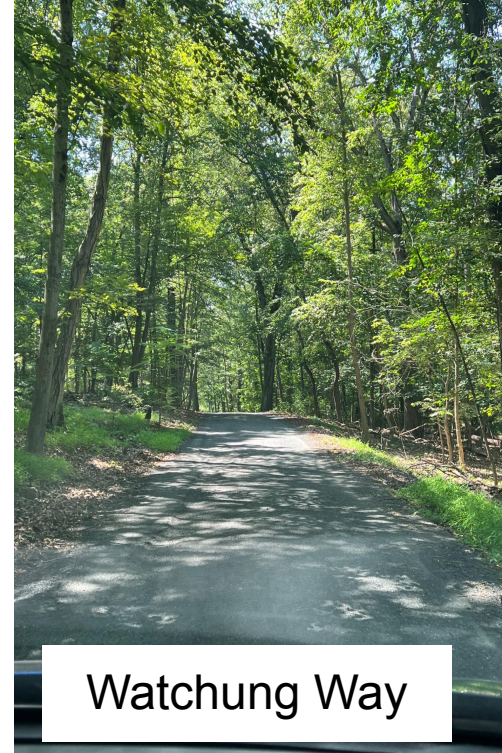
Circle View



Circle View

The quote to repair  
“missing  
asphalt/wash-out  
throughout the curbline”  
for 4 homes on Circle  
View is **\$76,089.12.**

*Circle View is a single-lane, double dead-end  
road only accessible off Watchung Way.*



Watchung Way

The quote to repair “missing asphalt/wash-out  
throughout the roadway” for Watchung Way is  
**\$301,317.36.**

*Watchung Way is a mostly single-lane road off Horseshoe and the only access  
to Runnels Hospital and Circle View.*



Russo Place

The estimated quote for “damaged/lifted asphalt/stone” on Russo Place is **\$100,845** and the cost to camera/remove stone and debris from pies is **\$375,000**.

*Russo Place is a dead end, mainly industrial road off Hamilton Avenue. The Flex School and Wharton School of Performing Arts are located on this road.*



Russo Place -  
entrance/exit to  
Flex School



Russo Place



Park  
Avenue



Park Avenue at  
intersection/crosswalk at  
Mountain Avenue.

The quotes for “lifted asphalt/electrical basin repair” for Park Avenue near Mountain Avenue Intersection are: **\$25,865** and **\$27,416**.

*Park Avenue and Mountain Avenue are main roads and high traffic areas.*

Holly Glen Lane S - included  
in repair assessment

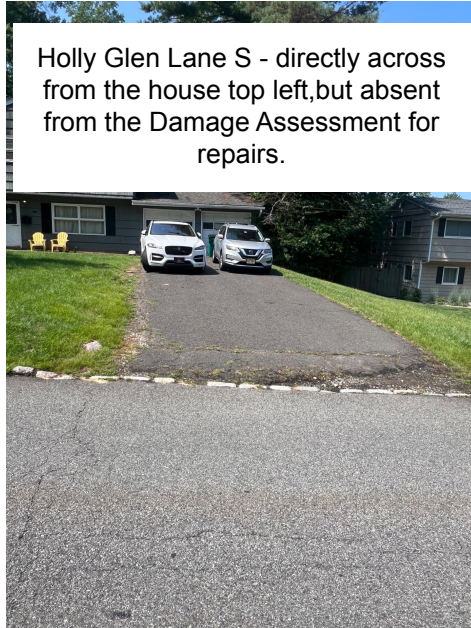


The quote to repair “damage to curbline  
and asphalt wash-out/road is sunken in  
parts going down to Holly Glen Lane”

South at 4 house is **\$321,525.60.**

*Holly Glen S is a residential road off Mountain Avenue.*

Holly Glen Lane S - directly across  
from the house top left, but absent  
from the Damage Assessment for  
repairs.



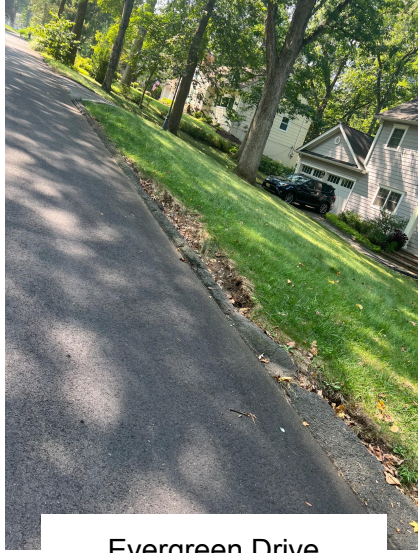
Holly Glen Lane S -  
included in repair  
Assessment but no  
evidence of damage as  
of 8/15/25.



Holly Glen Lane - not  
included in assessment

The quote to repair  
“damaged/missing  
asphalt” at 1 home on  
Holly Glen Lane is  
**“DPW will repair.”**

*Holly Glen is a residential road off  
Mountain Avenue.*



Evergreen Drive

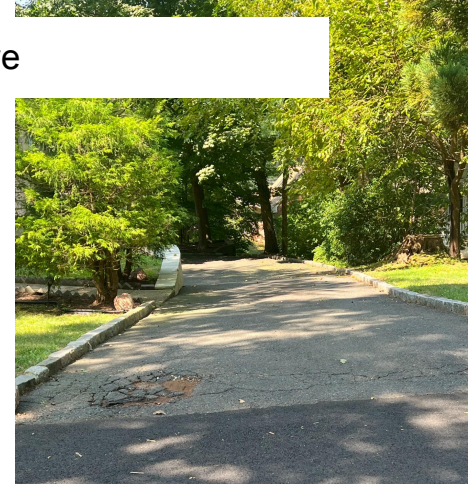


Evergreen Drive

The quote to repair “damaged berm/missing asphalt” at 4 addresses on Evergreen Drive is **\$5,120** for 1 home and **\$2,800** for 2 additional homes. No estimate for the 4th home address listed in Assessment.  
*Evergreen Drive is long stretch of residential road located off Timber Drive.*



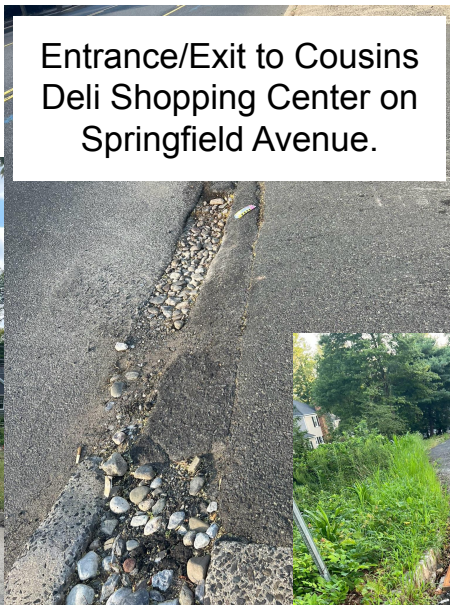
Evergreen Drive



# The Ones That Didn't Make the Cut



Princeton Avenue near  
intersection of Mountain  
Avenue.



Entrance/Exit to Cousins  
Deli Shopping Center on  
Springfield Avenue.



Deerpath Lane near  
intersection of  
Mountain Avenue.



Shadow Lane



Shadow Lane  
at intersection  
with Riverbend  
Road.

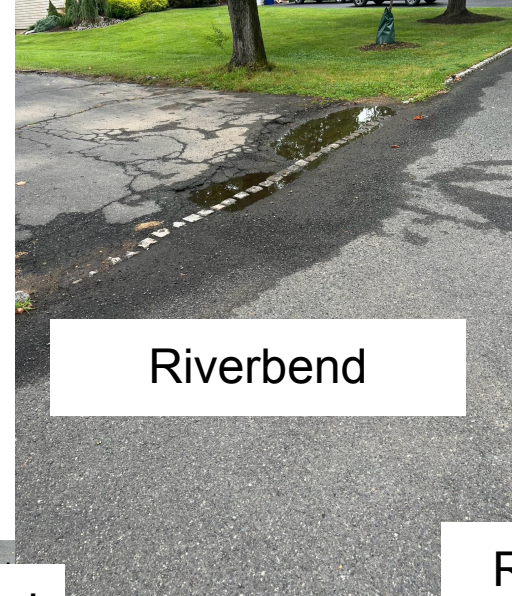
More...



Intersection of Cromwell and Chaucer



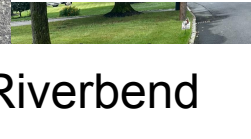
Cromwell



Riverbend



Riverbend



Riverbend



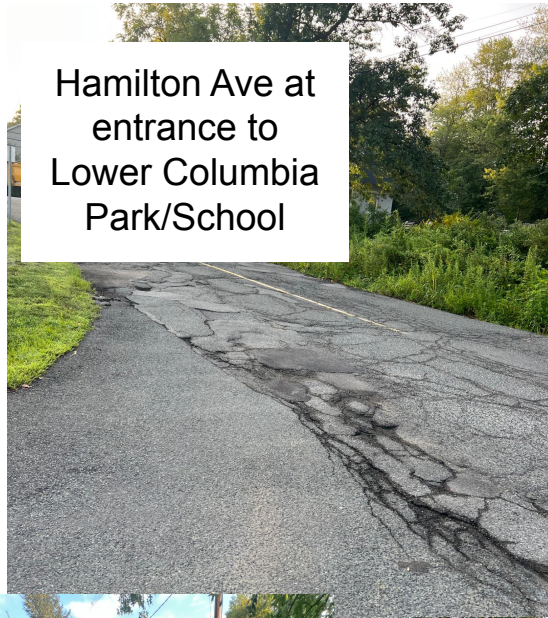
And more!



Forest Avenue



Hamilton Ave at  
entrance to  
Lower Columbia  
Park/School



Exit to MKM  
ECC at  
Mountain  
Avenue



Hamilton Avenue at entrance to  
Lower Columbia Park/School



Snyder  
Avenue

