



MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC GROWTH
& INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

WORKS
— MEGID —

GOOD WORKS

STRONGER BY DESIGN

Hon. Robert Nesta Morgan, MP, JP
Minister with Responsibility for Works



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MINISTRY OF
**Economic Growth and
Infrastructure Development**

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INTRODUCTION

Madam Speaker, Today I am thankful.

Thankful for the privilege of serving the people of Jamaica. The Works portfolio touches the daily life of every citizen. The infrastructure challenge before us is not small, and neither is the Government's ambition to meet it.

In this portfolio, **Madam Speaker,** one quickly learns that potholes come in many forms. Some are found on the road. Others appear in politics. The responsibility of leadership is to navigate both with patience, discipline, and a steady hand.

I first express sincere appreciation to Prime Minister, Dr. the Most Honourable Andrew Holness, for his continued confidence in my stewardship of this critical portfolio. Prime Minister, thank you for your vision, your leadership, and your insistence that Jamaica must not merely repair what exists, but build the infrastructure required for the next stage of national development.

I also acknowledge the outstanding team within the Ministry of Economic Growth and Infrastructure Development, led by Permanent Secretary Mrs. Arlene Williams. Her steady judgement, administrative discipline, and commitment to excellence continue to support the execution of this broad and demanding portfolio.

To the National Works Agency and the National Road Operating and Constructing Company Limited, our principal implementing agencies, I offer sincere thanks. Your teams operate under difficult conditions: demanding terrain, heavy rainfall, tight timelines, ageing infrastructure, rising costs, and high public expectations. Yet, day after day, you continue to deliver.

To the people of Clarendon North Central, thank you for the confidence you continue to place in me. You keep me grounded, focused, and accountable. You remind me every day that public service is not an abstract calling; it is a daily obligation to represent, advocate, and deliver.

I thank my parliamentary colleagues on both sides of this Honourable House. I appreciate your advocacy on behalf of your constituents and your persistent reminders about roads in your communities. I assure you that those messages have been received, often more than once, and the work to address many of those concerns is underway.

To my family, thank you for your patience, sacrifice, and steadfast support. Public service requires long hours, difficult decisions, and time away from those we love. Your understanding makes this work possible.

Madam Speaker, Finally, I want to thank the Jamaican people.

When I think about the responsibility this portfolio carries, I am reminded every day of what ordinary Jamaicans experience when they leave their homes. The mother in St. Elizabeth navigating a potholed track to get her child to school. The farmer in Trelawny whose truck takes a beating on every trip to the market. The shop owner in a Portland community whose customers stopped coming because the road made access too difficult. The commuter in Kingston whose vehicle absorbs punishment on our roads.

These are not abstract concerns. They are the daily realities that this portfolio exists to change.

I say this at the outset, **Madam Speaker**, because I am under no illusion about how many Jamaicans feel when they travel Jamaica's roads. They feel frustrated. In many cases, they feel forgotten. And I want to be clear: that frustration is not unreasonable. It is not political. It is the legitimate expectation of citizens who pay taxes, elect governments, and deserve roads that reflect their investment in this country.

Madam Speaker, Before I outline what this Government has been doing, I want to address a question that is in the minds of many Jamaicans. How is it possible that a Government can invest billions of dollars in roads, and yet the average Jamaican still feels that the roads are in a deplorable state?

To understand why the roads are in the condition they are in, Jamaicans must understand something that goes far deeper than potholes.

The state of our roads is not simply an engineering problem. It is the physical legacy of decades of economic mismanagement.

When a government borrows beyond its means, when interest costs once consumed nearly seventy cents of every dollar collected in taxes, when the wage bill crowds out every other category of spending, infrastructure does not get funded. It gets deferred. Year after year, budget after budget, the rehabilitation that should have happened did not happen. The drainage that should have been upgraded was not upgraded. The bridges that needed replacing were patched instead. The deficit did not accumulate only in our fiscal ledger. It accumulated in the ground beneath our feet.

That is the inheritance this Government received. For decades, including long periods under PNP administrations, Jamaica carried one of the highest debt-to-GDP ratios in the world. The financial sector collapsed. FINSAC wiped out the savings, the businesses, and the futures of an entire generation of Jamaicans. And the debt spiral that followed consumed the fiscal resources that should have been building roads, schools, and hospitals for the next 30 years.

Now, **Madam Speaker**, I anticipate the retort from members opposite: the JLP has been in power for over a decade, why haven't you fixed it?

When we took office in 2016, debt-to-GDP was still above 120 per cent. The unavoidable first task was to stabilise the economy and arrest the debt trajectory. Without that foundation, nothing else was possible. No SPARK. No bridge programme. No highway investment. Nothing.

Madam Speaker, you cannot build a house on a crumbling foundation, and you cannot build infrastructure on a broken economy.

Then came COVID-19, which collapsed tourism and devastated revenues, costing us years of hard-won fiscal progress. Then came global supply chain disruptions and inflationary shocks that drove up the cost of fuel, asphalt, steel, and equipment, meaning the same dollar built fewer roads. Then came Hurricane Beryl. Then came Hurricane Melissa, the most destructive hurricane to affect Jamaica in living memory, undoing in days infrastructure that had taken years and billions of dollars to build.

Madam Speaker, it is only within the last year that Jamaica's debt-to-GDP ratio has returned to levels last seen in the mid-1990s, before FINSAC, before the financial sector collapse. That is how long it has taken to undo the damage. Not ten years. Not twenty. An entire generation.

And yet, even against that backdrop, this Government has found the fiscal space to launch the largest road rehabilitation programme in Jamaica's history, to advance the Montego Bay Perimeter Road,



AERIAL VIEW OF MONTEGO BAY PERIMETER ROAD

to fund the Accelerated Bridge Programme, and to invest billions in drainage, bridges, and digital infrastructure.

The lesson is simple but important. A country cannot build world-class infrastructure without the fiscal capacity to pay for it. That capacity does not come from borrowing recklessly. It comes from managing an economy responsibly, reducing debt, stabilising the currency, controlling inflation, and creating the conditions under which tax revenues can be directed toward national investment rather than consumed by interest payments and wages.

Decades of underinvestment cannot be undone overnight, not in the middle of a pandemic, not while absorbing back-to-back hurricanes, not while global inflation is driving up the price of every tonne of asphalt. But under this Government, rest assured, they will be undone. Systematically. Deliberately. With the fiscal discipline we have demonstrated and the sustained investment that discipline has made possible.

The road to better roads, **Madam Speaker**, runs directly through a well-managed economy. Jamaica has spent a decade building that economy.

When this administration took on this challenge, it did not start from zero. It started from a massive infrastructure deficit created over decades of underinvestment. We are digging out from that deficit while managing stronger storms, higher construction costs, global supply shocks, and rising public expectations.

And it is within that context that I invite this Honourable House and the Jamaican people to examine not only the projects being delivered, but the philosophy guiding them, the scale of the challenge being confronted, and the seriousness of the Government's response.

GOOD WORKS - STRONGER BY DESIGN

Madam Speaker, That is why this year's theme is **Good Works - Stronger by Design**. It is not a slogan. It is a governing philosophy.

It means that the work of this portfolio cannot be judged only by the number of contracts signed, the number of kilometres paved, or the number of projects announced. Those things matter. But they are not enough.

The real test is whether the infrastructure we build performs under pressure.

That is the standard we are applying.

For too long, Jamaica's infrastructure challenge has been treated mainly as a repair problem. A road fails, we patch it. A drain blocks, we clear it. A bridge weakens, we intervene. Those responses are necessary, and we will continue to respond where immediate action is required.



GREENDALE CRESCENT, ST. ANDREW - V DRAIN FORMATION ON SPARK ROAD

But the country cannot build its future on reaction alone.

Madam Speaker, Jamaica cannot become a logistics hub, a tourism powerhouse, a manufacturing centre, an agricultural exporter, or a modern digital economy on weak infrastructure.

Strong infrastructure is not decoration. It is national development.

It determines how goods move, how workers commute, how students reach school, how farmers reach markets, how communities recover after disaster, and how investors judge the seriousness of a country's development ambition.

So the central issue before this portfolio is not only how much we build.

It is how well we build.

How deliberately we plan.

How responsibly we spend.

How resiliently our infrastructure performs under pressure.

And how clearly the Jamaican people can see the benefit of the investments being made on their behalf.

Madam Speaker, Guided by this philosophy, the Works Portfolio is being executed through four strategic priorities.

First, resilient infrastructure — roads, bridges, drains, and corridors that are designed to last longer and perform better under climate and traffic pressure.



GREENDALE CRESCENT, ST. ANDREW - COMPLETED V DRAIN FORMATION ON SPARK ROAD

Second, integrated development — ensuring that road works are coordinated with water, drainage, utilities, digital infrastructure, pedestrian safety, and wider community needs.

Third, efficient delivery — strengthening procurement, supervision, contractor accountability, and project management so that public works are delivered to the right standard, at the right cost, and within a reasonable time.

Fourth, measurable outcomes — ensuring that success is not measured only by expenditure or activity, but by reduced travel times, safer roads, better access, stronger communities, improved productivity, and greater value for the Jamaican people.

Madam Speaker, themes are easy to declare. The real test is delivery.

So I now turn to the programmes and projects through which this philosophy is being put into action across Jamaica.

SPARK PROGRAMME



▶ WATCH NOW

Madam Speaker, The clearest expression of this Government’s new approach to road infrastructure is the Shared Prosperity through Accelerated Improvement to our Road Network Programme, better known as SPARK.



COMPLETED SPARK ROAD - RANSFORD CLOSE

SPARK is one of the most ambitious road rehabilitation programmes ever undertaken by the Government of Jamaica.

Valued at J\$45 billion, including a dedicated J\$5 billion allocation for water infrastructure, SPARK represents the largest coordinated investment in community and main road rehabilitation in Jamaica’s history.

Madam Speaker, I want the country to understand clearly what SPARK is, and what it is not.

SPARK is not a patching programme.

It is not a temporary repair exercise.

It is not an attempt to spread a little asphalt everywhere and pretend that the road problem has been solved.

SPARK is a rehabilitation and reconstruction programme built on modern engineering standards, improved drainage, stronger pavement structures, better utility coordination, and long-term value for money.

Every road is being designed with a minimum service life of seven years, with the potential to perform for up to fourteen years through structured maintenance.

Madam Speaker, Since works commenced on December 31, 2024, the programme has continued to gather momentum. As of April 2026, implementation stands at approximately 26 per cent completion. Nine work orders valued at J\$18.39 billion have been issued, covering 369 roads across four major packages. Construction has commenced on 210 roads, 109 roads have already been completed, and expenditure has reached approximately J\$8.9 billion.

But, **Madam Speaker**, these are not merely statistics on a project report.

They represent the road a child uses to get to school.

The route a farmer uses to reach the market.

The link a taxi operator depends on to earn a living.

The access road that determines whether a community feels connected or cut off.

That is why SPARK matters.

I want to speak to two groups of Jamaicans directly at this point.

To those in communities where SPARK work has already begun: I ask for your patience. I know that construction is disruptive. Dust, detours, uneven surfaces, and delays are real inconveniences, and I do not minimise them. But the work is coming to completion, and when it is done, you will have a road built to last; not patched to survive another rainy season, but built to endure.

To those whose roads have not yet been reached: we are coming to you. The programme is sequenced, not selective. Every constituency has a baseline allocation. The work is advancing. And we are determined that the roads delivered under SPARK must be roads that perform better and last longer.



SPARK ROAD GREENDALE CRESCENT, ST. ANDREW (NOW COMPLETED)

Madam Speaker, the programme has two major components.

Part A focuses on local and community roads. These are the roads that connect people to schools, clinics, churches, markets, farms, small businesses, and public services. Works under this component include road rehabilitation and reconstruction, drainage installation and rehabilitation, pavement strengthening, retaining walls, slope stabilisation, road markings, safety features, and, where required, water infrastructure integration.



SPARK ROAD- BARNSTAPLE, MANCHESTER - COMPLETED

Part B focuses on main roads within the National Works Agency network. These corridors carry heavier traffic, connect economic centres, support public transportation, and require more complex engineering solutions. Works include major road reconstruction, geometric improvements, upgraded drainage, integrated water infrastructure, fibre-optic ducts to support future digital connectivity, signage, markings, and road safety improvements.

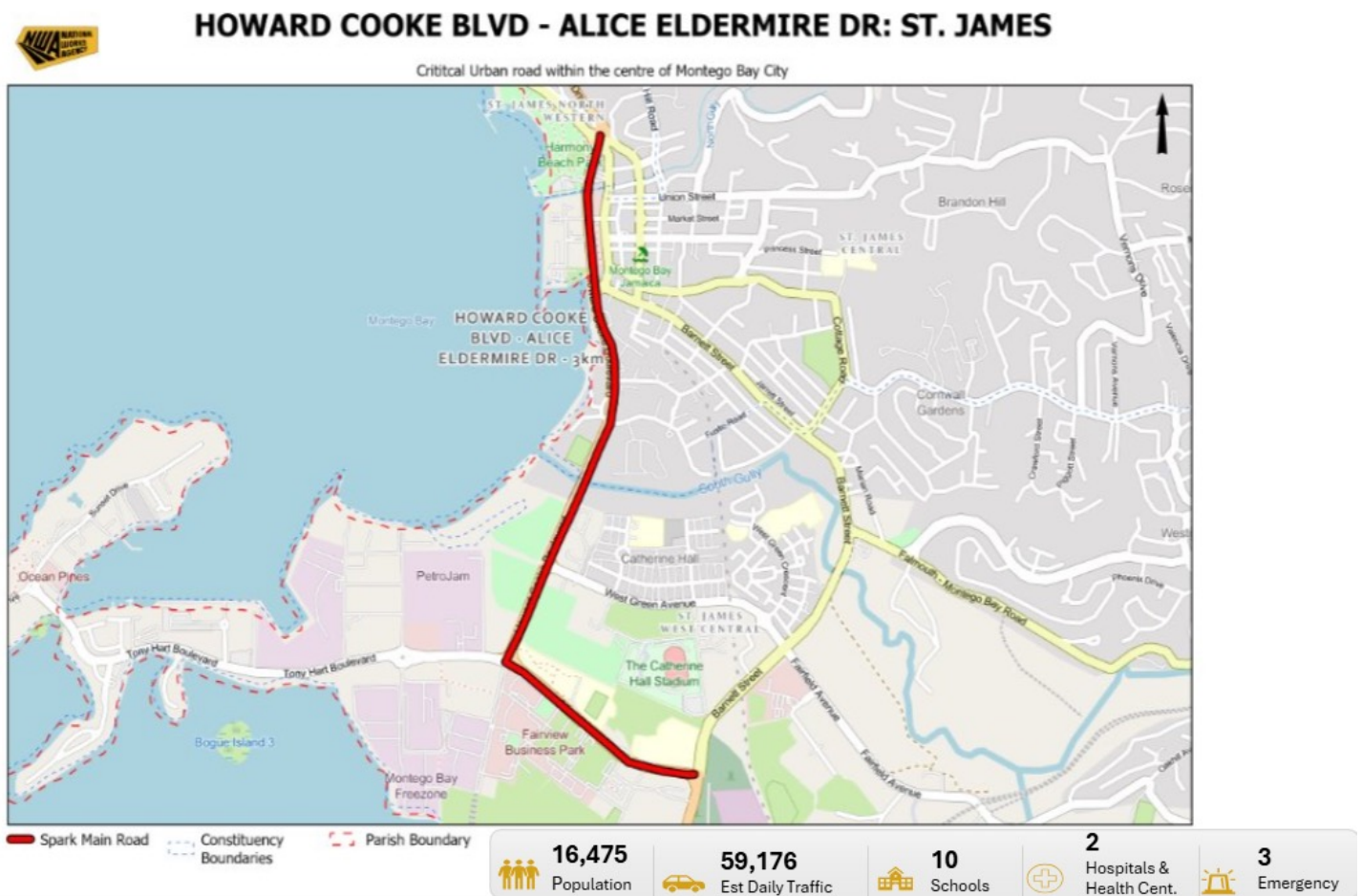
Together, these two components ensure that SPARK addresses both the roads that connect communities and the corridors that move the economy.

Madam Speaker, I want to pause on the main road component because this is an important part of SPARK that must not be overlooked.

The community roads matter deeply because they connect people to daily life. But the main roads carry the heavier burden of national movement. They connect towns, parishes, commercial centres, schools, hospitals, ports, tourism corridors, and emergency services. They move workers, students, farmers, goods, public transportation, and visitors.

That is why the main road component of SPARK is being approached with particular discipline.

Under Work Orders 8 and 10, main road corridors are being prioritised based on data and strategic function. The National Works Agency has assessed these roads using indicators such as population served, estimated daily traffic, schools, hospitals and health centres, emergency facilities, urban-rural connectivity, and the role each road plays in the wider transport network.



ONE OF THE SPARK MAIN ROADS - ST. JAMES

This means that when we intervene on a main road, we are not only repairing a surface. We are strengthening a corridor.

That is why roads such as Molyne's Road, Washington Boulevard, Red Hills Road, Stony Hill to Golden Spring, Cooperage to Gordon Town, Sir Florizel Glasspole Boulevard to Windward Road, Spanish Town

Bypass, Gregory Park Main Road, Port Henderson Road, Braeton Road to Salt Pond Road, Linstead Bypass, Old Harbour to Freetown, and other main corridors are so important. These are not isolated pieces of asphalt. They are arteries of national life.

And when those arteries are strengthened, the benefits are felt far beyond the immediate road surface. Travel becomes more reliable. Commerce moves more efficiently. Communities become more accessible. Emergency response improves. Public transport operates more effectively. And the economy becomes more connected.

So, **Madam Speaker**, SPARK is not only rebuilding community roads. It is also strengthening main corridors that carry the daily movement of the country.

Madam Speaker, I also want to address the question of fairness.

The roads selected under SPARK were not chosen in secret, and the allocation of resources was not arbitrary.

The project pipeline was developed through islandwide consultations coordinated by the Constituency Development Fund Monitoring Unit, working with local stakeholders, Members of Parliament, the National Works Agency, municipal authorities, and community representatives. That process matters because infrastructure must be technically sound, but it must also be socially responsive.

A road may look small on a national map, but to the people who depend on it every day, it may be the most important road in the country.

Madam Speaker, the allocation model also balances equality with equity. Every constituency receives a baseline allocation of approximately J\$200 million. That is the equal amount. But Jamaica's constituencies do not all have the same road length, the same terrain, the same rural spread, or the same infrastructure burden. Therefore, an additional equity allocation is applied based on the measured length of roads within each constituency.

In other words, every constituency benefits, but constituencies with larger road networks receive additional consideration.

Madam Speaker, based on the road-length assessment used for this allocation model, Jamaica's measured road network is approximately 26,050 kilometres, comprising approximately 21,037 kilometres of local and community roads and approximately 5,014 kilometres of main roads.

For public communication, we often speak of Jamaica having approximately 27,000 kilometres of roads nationally, with approximately 5,000 kilometres falling under the direct responsibility of the National Works Agency.

But whichever figure is used, the central point remains the same: the challenge is vast, and the Government has had to design a programme that is national in reach, fair in distribution, and disciplined in execution.

Madam Speaker, SPARK is historic, but it cannot repair every road in Jamaica at once. It is one major part of a wider response that includes routine maintenance, GO, emergency works, bridge replacement, gully cleaning, drainage interventions, CAPEX, major highway investments, and institutional reform through the One Road Authority.



GO ROAD REHABILITATION - ANGELS CRESCENT, ST. CATHERINE

Madam Speaker, The Government entered into a programme delivery contract, but implementation was always designed to proceed in phases through work orders. This allows for sequencing, oversight, quality control, and responsible management of resources as works move across the island.

The contract provides for a 24-month execution period, supported by an additional 12-month Defects Notification Period for quality assurance and post-construction remediation where necessary.

The project commenced on December 31, 2024, with an original completion date of December 30, 2026. Based on current scheduling and implementation realities, the anticipated completion date has been revised to March 31, 2027.

Madam Speaker, I know that people want the work done quickly. So do I.

But speed without quality is not success.

A road rushed today and failed tomorrow is not value for money.

The commitment of this Government is not simply to move fast. It is to move properly, transparently, and at a standard that protects the public investment.

That is what SPARK represents.

Not patching.

Not pretending.

But rebuilding Jamaica's road network with purpose, discipline, fairness, and design.

MAJOR CAPITAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Madam Speaker, while SPARK is transforming road access in communities and along selected main corridors, the Government is also advancing major capital infrastructure projects that are reshaping mobility, commerce, tourism, and regional development.

That is why the major capital programme is focused not only on road construction, but on economic connectivity.

Montego Bay Perimeter Road Project



Madam Speaker, one of the clearest examples of this approach is the Montego Bay Perimeter Road Project.

Montego Bay is not only Jamaica's second city. It is one of the most important economic centres in the country. It carries the weight of tourism, commerce, airport traffic, port activity, housing expansion, employment, and regional movement across western Jamaica.

The Montego Bay Perimeter Road Project is designed to respond to that pressure in a serious and lasting way.

Being executed under a Design and Build arrangement and managed by the National Road Operating and Constructing Company, the project represents one of the most significant transportation investments currently underway in Jamaica.

The original contract value of US\$274.5 million has been revised to US\$354.25 million to accommodate expanded scope and enhanced engineering requirements.

Today, the project stands at approximately 80 per cent completion, with a workforce of 525 persons, 87 per cent of whom are Jamaican.



MONTEGO BAY PERIMETER ROAD - COMPLETED ASPHALT WORKS AS AT MAY 21, 2026



MONTEGO BAY PERIMETER ROAD - ASPHALT QUALITY ASSURANCE TESTING

Madam Speaker, what is being built in Montego Bay is not merely another road.

It is an integrated transportation system designed to move through-traffic away from the urban core, reduce congestion, improve travel reliability, strengthen road safety, and unlock new development opportunities across the western region.

At the heart of the project is the 15-kilometre Montego Bay Bypass, which will divert traffic away from the city centre and improve movement across the region.

Complementing this is the Long Hill Bypass, a 10.5-kilometre corridor upgraded from its original two-lane concept to a four-lane facility with median barriers. That decision reflects the very principle of building stronger by design: not merely designing for today's traffic, but anticipating tomorrow's demand.

Within the city itself, major upgrades are progressing along West Green Avenue, where modern intersections, sidewalks, drainage infrastructure, and traffic management systems are being incorporated.

At Barnett Street, road expansion works and the construction of a new two-lane bridge over the Montego River will address a longstanding bottleneck in a critical commercial area.

Madam Speaker, the Montego Bay Bypass is approximately 85 per cent complete. The Long Hill Bypass is approximately 50 per cent complete. Works along West Green Avenue are approximately 45 per cent complete, while Barnett Street has reached approximately 30 per cent completion.

A Comprehensive Drainage Study for Greater Montego Bay is being undertaken alongside the construction works. That study is essential because Montego Bay's future cannot be built on roads alone. It must be built on drainage, stormwater management, flood mitigation, and climate resilience.

Madam Speaker, the importance of this drainage-first approach is clearly demonstrated in Catherine Hall.



CATHERINE HALL IMPACT AFTER HURRICANE MELISSA

Following Hurricane Melissa, technical assessments confirmed that the flooding experienced in Catherine Hall was not the result of a simple or isolated drain failure. It was the result of an extreme, multi-hazard event: intense rainfall, unprecedented flows in the Montego River, storm surge effects, sediment movement, debris accumulation, and the limitations of an ageing buried drainage system.

The assessment found that rainfall exceeded 350 millimetres within 24 hours, with peak intensities reaching approximately 295 millimetres per hour. It also found that the Montego River recorded peak flows estimated between 2,132 and 2,653 cubic metres per second, consistent with a 500-year return period event. Those flows exceeded the design capacity of the Barnett Street Bridge by approximately 1,200 to 1,600 per cent.

That is the scale of the climate reality we are now confronting.

In response, the proposed Catherine Hall Drainage Concept Plan recommends a strategic transition from the existing buried drainage system to a surface-level lined concrete channel system. This approach is intended to increase conveyance capacity, make maintenance easier, improve performance in flat terrain, and reduce the risk that sediment and debris will render the system ineffective again.

Importantly, the proposed system is being developed in the context of the wider Montego River Flood Control Plan and is designed to preserve the existing levee system, with controlled discharge points and backflow prevention measures.

Madam Speaker, this is what resilience now requires.

Madam Speaker, when completed, the Montego Bay Perimeter Road Project will reduce congestion, improve travel time reliability, strengthen tourism and freight movement, improve safety, and support new commercial, residential, and industrial development across western Jamaica.

It is not merely a road around Montego Bay.
It is an investment in the future of western Jamaica.

Southern Coastal Highway Improvement Project

Madam Speaker, the same philosophy is evident in the Southern Coastal Highway Improvement Project, better known as SCHIP.

SCHIP is one of Jamaica's largest integrated road infrastructure projects. It is creating a modern southern and eastern corridor, improving connectivity across Clarendon, Manchester, St. Andrew, St. Thomas, and Portland.

I am pleased to report that SCHIP is approximately 98 per cent complete. All major sections under Parts A and B(ii) are open to the public, while remaining segments are substantially complete and moving toward final completion.

The project has delivered reconstructed roads, upgraded drainage, water infrastructure, and fibre-optic ducting.

That is important, **Madam Speaker**, because modern road building cannot simply be about asphalt. When we open a road corridor, we must use that opportunity to address water, drainage, utilities, digital connectivity, road safety, and future development.

The benefits of SCHIP are already being felt: reduced travel times, improved road safety, stronger market access, better community connectivity, and a southern corridor better positioned for investment, tourism, agriculture, housing, and commerce.



AERIAL VIEW OF SOUTH-COAST HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (SCHIP)

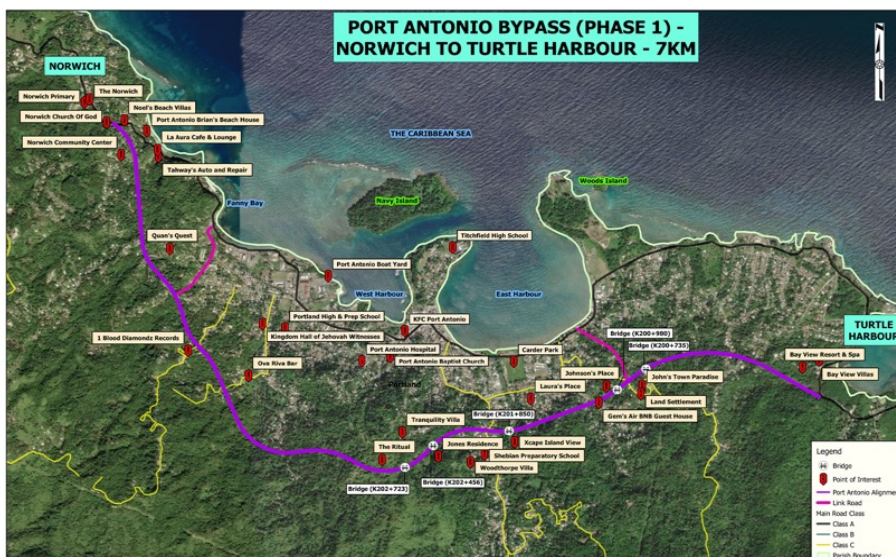
Port Antonio Bypass Mapping

Madam Speaker, An important extension of this vision is the Port Antonio Bypass.

Port Antonio has enormous potential, but its development has long been constrained by congestion, limited road capacity, and difficult internal movement.

The bypass is currently at approximately 6 per cent completion, with design and land acquisition activities continuing.

Once completed, it will reduce congestion in the town, improve road safety, enhance mobility, and create new opportunities for investment and development across Portland.



AERIAL VIEW OF PORT ANTONIO BYPASS



PORT ANTONIO BYPASS - GROUND BREAKING CEREMONY

CAPEX Programme



CAPEX GRANGE LANE - SITE VISIT



CAPEX GRANGE LANE - MAPPING

Madam Speaker, the Government is also advancing targeted urban mobility improvements through the CAPEX Programme.

I am pleased to report that the dualisation of Grange Lane in Portmore is now substantially complete and already providing meaningful relief to motorists and commuters.

Work also continues on the widening of Braeton Road and Hellshire Main Road, which has reached approximately 40 per cent completion.

These works are especially important as Portmore prepares to become Jamaica's fifteenth parish. The road network must be strengthened to support population growth, commercial activity, public transportation, and future development.

Madam Speaker, Additional CAPEX works are also being advanced. The widening of Arthur Wint Drive, including the installation of potable water and sewage infrastructure, has been advertised and taken through tender opening, with an estimated project cost of approximately J\$2.21 billion.

The widening of Camp Road, also including potable water and sewerage infrastructure, has similarly been advertised and taken through tender opening, with an estimated project cost of approximately J\$1.18 billion.

Together, these two advertised packages represent approximately J\$3.4 billion in planned urban road improvement works.

Madam Speaker, the wider CAPEX pipeline also includes upgrades to: Tom Redcam Drive, which is expected to be advanced this year; East Kings House Road and Lady Musgrave Road; New Entry to Portmore and Municipal Boulevard; and Sandy Gully Bridge to Ken Hill Drive.

These projects are not simply road-widening exercises.

They are integrated infrastructure projects.

They address traffic movement, potable water infrastructure, sewerage infrastructure, road safety, utility coordination, and the long-term functionality of critical urban corridors.

Madam Speaker, taken together, these projects show a clear direction. SPARK is rebuilding communities.

The Montego Bay Perimeter Road is transforming western mobility.

SCHIP is strengthening the southern and eastern corridor.

The Port Antonio Bypass is preparing Portland for growth.

And CAPEX is addressing urban congestion where citizens feel it every day.

This is not scattered construction.

It is a national infrastructure programme designed to improve movement, support development, strengthen resilience, and connect Jamaicans more effectively to opportunity.

ACCELERATED BRIDGE PROGRAMME



Madam Speaker, if roads connect communities, bridges make those connections possible.

A road may take you most of the way, but where there is a river, a gully, a valley, or a break in the terrain, it is the bridge that completes the journey.

That is why bridge infrastructure is not a secondary concern. It is central to national connectivity, public safety, disaster resilience, and economic life.

Madam Speaker, Jamaica has many bridges that have served us for decades. But age, heavier traffic, severe weather, river action, and deferred maintenance have placed increasing pressure on several structures across the island.

That is why the Government has placed major emphasis on strengthening and modernising the national bridge network.

I am pleased to report that the Accelerated Bridge Programme, which will deliver 55 bridges across Jamaica, has advanced substantially.



EXISTING



ARTISTIC IMPRESSION OF THE NEW BRIDGE

ACCELERATED BRIDGE PROGRAMME - ASHKINISH BRIDGE, HANOVER

This programme is designed to improve connectivity and support sustainable economic and social growth through safe, durable, high-quality, climate-resistant infrastructure.

Importantly, the updated programme also accommodates seven emergency bridges, allowing the Government to respond to urgent connectivity needs while advancing the wider national bridge replacement programme.

Madam Speaker, the updated technical offer has been submitted, with negotiations and final approvals targeted over the coming weeks. That shows the programme is moving from policy approval and technical development into financing and execution.

Each bridge requires design work, environmental and social due diligence, geotechnical assessment, fabrication, shipping, installation, traffic management, and site-specific construction. Speed matters, but so does safety. Urgency matters, but so does engineering discipline.

Madam Speaker, this programme is not only about replacing old structures. It is about building greater resilience into the road network.

Our bridges must be designed to withstand stronger floods, heavier flows, changing rainfall patterns, and the more frequent extreme weather events that now define our climate reality.

Hurricane Melissa reminded us that weak links in the road network can quickly become points of isolation. When a bridge is compromised, the road on either side loses its full value. That is why bridge resilience is road resilience.

And that is why the Accelerated Bridge Programme is being developed not simply as a construction programme, but as a national connectivity and resilience programme.

Madam Speaker, we have already seen the importance of this work. On June 5, we reopened the long-awaited Troy Bridge, restoring a vital connection for communities between Manchester and Trelawny.



AERIAL VIEW OF TROY BRIDGE, TRELAWNY & MANCHESTER



The Spring Village Bridge in St. Catherine was completed and officially opened on June 12, demonstrating the value of effective collaboration between Government and private sector partners.

And work continues on the Craigmill Bridge in Portland, another important structure that will improve safety and access for the communities it serves.

ROUTINE MAINTENANCE, GO ROAD REHABILITATION AND RESILIENCE WORKS

Madam Speaker,

While major infrastructure projects are essential to Jamaica's long-term development, good infrastructure management is not measured only by what we build new.

That is why routine maintenance and resilience works remain central to the Works portfolio.

Madam Speaker, following the passage of Hurricane Melissa and the further deterioration of sections of the road network, the Government implemented a J\$1.7 billion islandwide patching programme, known as the Graded Overlay Road Rehabilitation Programme, or GO.



ROAD MAINTENANCE - PORTMORE

I am pleased to report that this programme is now approximately 95 per cent complete, restoring road surfaces and improving driving conditions in communities across the island.

Madam Speaker, following Hurricane Melissa, the Government moved quickly to support emergency response and restoration works across the road network.

Through the National Works Agency, significant resources were directed toward immediate post-hurricane interventions, including clearance and drain cleaning, traffic signal repairs, electricity reconnection for critical traffic infrastructure, and emergency patching.

By March 2026, approximately J\$5 billion had been applied by the National Works Agency to these emergency activities. When the full scope of documented emergency response works is taken into account, activity across clearance, drainage, traffic signal restoration, and emergency patching amounted to approximately J\$6.26 billion.



ROAD TOUR OF SOUTHERN TRELAWNY - POST HURRICANE MELISSA

Madam Speaker, this is the kind of work that often happens under pressure and away from the spotlight, but it is essential to national recovery. After a storm, the first duty of the road authority is to restore movement, protect public safety, and reopen access for families, businesses, emergency services, and communities.



GULLY MAINTENANCE - BURGHER GULLY - EAST KINGSTON

Madam Speaker, the Government has also intensified drainage and gully works because the country must understand one basic truth about road infrastructure:

Water is one of the greatest enemies of a road. Where drainage is inadequate, the best asphalt will fail. Where gullies are blocked, communities flood. Where culverts are undersized or obstructed, roads wash out.



GULLY MAINTENANCE - SANDY GULLY - ST. ANDREW WESTERN

Where stormwater is not properly managed, the public investment is weakened before its time. That is why we are placing stronger emphasis on drainage-first thinking across the portfolio. In May 2026, works commenced under the St. Andrew Gully Repair Programme, targeting critical drainage systems including Carawina Avenue, Torrington Bridge, and several major gullies throughout the parish.

Early phases of the programme have already delivered results, with initial works completed and additional interventions progressing.

Madam Speaker, These works may not always attract the same attention as a new highway or a major bridge, but their importance cannot be overstated.

Madam Speaker, Hurricane Melissa reinforced this reality in the clearest possible terms.

It tested the road network, damaged infrastructure, isolated communities, deposited debris and sediment, exposed drainage weaknesses, and reminded us again that a single major event can place extraordinary pressure on national systems.

But the lessons from Melissa are not being filed away in reports.



HOLLAND BAMBOO ROAD CLEARING POST HURRICANE MELISSA

They are being applied.

They are shaping stronger drainage standards, improved slope stabilisation measures, better bridge designs, more disciplined project planning, and a more proactive approach to emergency preparedness.

Madam Speaker, as Jamaica faces each hurricane season, the National Works Agency

continues to maintain a posture of readiness.

Equipment, materials, and emergency supplies are being pre-positioned across operational regions.

Vulnerable corridors, bridges, slopes, and drainage systems continue to be assessed.

Critical access routes have been identified to support rapid restoration of connectivity after a major event.

Technical teams remain on standby for immediate assessment and response.

And coordination continues with national emergency partners, including ODPEM, municipal authorities, and other relevant agencies.

Madam Speaker, that is why this Government will continue to invest not only in roads people can see, but also in the systems that protect those roads: drainage, maintenance, gully cleaning, slope stabilisation, emergency response, and climate-informed design.

INSTITUTIONAL REFORM: ONE ROAD AUTHORITY

Madam Speaker, stronger infrastructure also requires stronger institutions.

It is not enough to build better roads if the systems for planning, classifying, maintaining, regulating, and managing those roads remain fragmented.

Jamaica has approximately 27,000 kilometres of roads nationally. Approximately 5,000 kilometres fall under the direct responsibility of the National Works Agency. The remaining network includes parochial, community, local, and farm roads that are essential to daily life, agriculture, commerce, education, tourism, and community access.

But to the Jamaican citizen, these distinctions are often invisible.



ONE ROAD AUTHORITY (ORA) - CONSULTATION - LOCAL GOVERNMENT

When a road is bad, the citizen does not first ask whether it is a main road, a parochial road, or a community road.

The citizen simply asks: when will it be fixed?

That is why institutional reform is so important.

For too long, Jamaica's road network has been affected by fragmented responsibility, uneven standards, overlapping mandates, inconsistent maintenance practices, and limited national coordination across classes of roads.

These are not merely administrative problems.

They affect delivery.

They affect maintenance.

They affect accountability.

They affect how quickly problems are identified.

They affect how resources are prioritised.

And they affect the public's experience of Government.

Madam Speaker, that is why Cabinet has approved the establishment of a One Road Authority.

The objective is not to weaken local government.

It is not to remove the importance of parish-level responsiveness.

It is not to ignore the knowledge that Members of Parliament, councillors, municipal authorities, and communities bring to local road priorities.

The objective is to create a clearer, stronger, more coordinated national framework for road planning, standards, prioritisation, asset management, regulation, and delivery.

Madam Speaker, the proposed institutional model is a Model B Executive Agency.

That is important because this is not a purely administrative reform. Roads are technical assets. They require engineering discipline, financial management, project delivery capacity, regulatory oversight, and performance accountability.

Under the proposed model, the ORA will carry a dual mandate.

First, it will function as an implementor for national roads, bringing together the delivery functions currently associated with the National Works Agency, NROCC, and toll road corridor management.

Second, it will function as a Regulator for all roads, establishing standards, monitoring compliance, supporting road classification, and strengthening accountability across the wider road network.

This structure allows Jamaica to maintain delivery capacity while building a stronger regulatory framework.

Madam Speaker, one of the most important tools in this reform will be the Jamaican Road Register.

The Road Register will help Jamaica move from uncertainty to clarity.

It will support the classification of roads, provide a clearer public understanding of the road network, and assist with planning, prioritisation, reporting, and accountability.

The website being developed by the Jamaica Information Service and the National Spatial Data Management Branch is already substantially advanced. It is designed to allow the public to search, locate, and report road issues across the island through an interactive map and reporting interface.

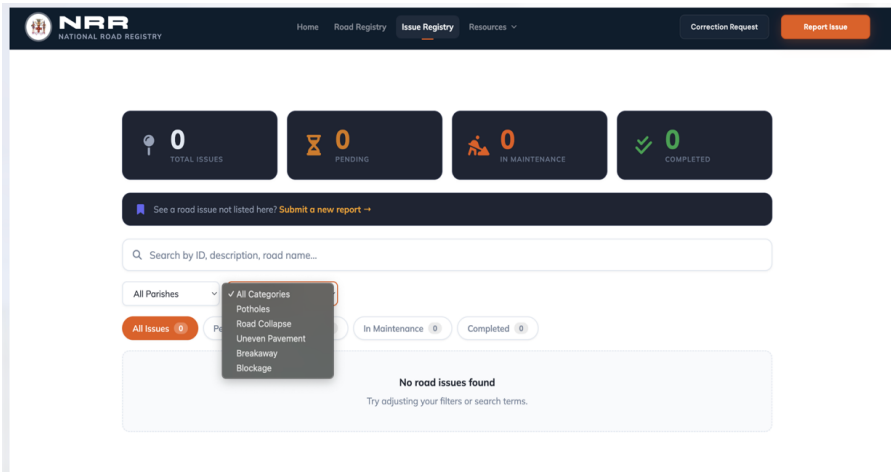
Importantly, the platform is being built with validation tools, including image and location checks, so that reports can be evidence-based and properly verified.

That matters because modern road management must be driven by reliable data.

A country cannot properly manage what it cannot properly identify.

Madam Speaker, the designation of national roads will also be guided by published criteria.

These criteria will consider strategic connectivity, traffic and economic load, resilience and access to



Jamaica Road Designation Framework

Road Category	Examples	Managing Body	ORA Role
National Roads (Class A)	Strategic corridors, gateway connections	ORA (Implementor)	Minister designates on ORA advice
National Roads (Class B / C)	Significant regional connections	ORA (Implementor)	Minister designates on ORA advice
Municipal / Parochial	Urban & community roads	Parochial Councils	Under ORA regulatory oversight
Farm Roads	Agricultural access	RADA / MoA	Under ORA regulatory oversight
Development Roads	Subdivisions, unadopted roads	Developers → Parochial	ORA approves adoption standards

- Key Principles**
- Minister retains discretion to designate any road as national, guided by published ORA criteria
 - Jamaica Road Register updated annually; ORA maintains and publishes
 - Road designation criteria based on function, traffic, strategic importance — not administrative boundaries

- Web site**
- 95% complete
 - Data cleaning and enhancement are advanced
 - The Register is currently undergoing test uploads to validate data integrity

critical services, network role, equity and national service obligation, and asset complexity. In practical terms, we will be better able to determine:

- Which roads connect ports, airports, industrial zones, tourism centres, and major markets.
- Which corridors carry heavy traffic and freight movement.
- Which roads are essential for emergency response, evacuation, hospitals, and public safety.
- Which roads connect parishes and regions.
- Which roads, if they fail, would isolate communities or cause wider national disruption.
- Which assets require specialised engineering, such as major bridges, slope stabilisation, coastal protection, or flood mitigation.

Madam Speaker, these questions cannot be answered properly by guesswork.

They require data.

They require engineering assessment.

They require climate-risk analysis.

They require economic and social evaluation.

And they require a national system that can connect local knowledge with technical planning.

That is what the One Road Authority is intended to support.

Madam Speaker, this reform is also being supported by development partners.

Through proposed grant support from the World Bank and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, resources are being directed toward the development of modern, harmonised, climate-resilient road standards; feasibility studies on pilot projects; a Jamaican road inventory; service level agreements; and formalised reporting structures.

This support is important because the ORA is not only about changing a name.

It is about building a modern road-sector management system.

It is about standards.



MINISTER MORGAN IN PERU FOR KEY INFRASTRUCTURE DISCUSSIONS AND TECHNICAL EXCHANGE

It is about data.

It is about performance.

It is about accountability.

It is about climate resilience.

And it is about ensuring that every class of road is managed within a clearer national framework.

Madam Speaker, let me be clear.

This reform is not about centralising power for its own sake.

It is about improving accountability.

It is about setting national standards.

It is about reducing duplication.

It is about ensuring that scarce resources are directed where they can have the greatest impact.

It is about making sure that Jamaica moves from reactive road management to planned network management.

Because the road problem facing Jamaica is not only a construction problem.

It is also a systems problem.

And systems problems require systems reform.

Madam Speaker, the establishment of the One Road Authority is being pursued through a phased implementation pathway.

Phase One focused on the policy direction, institutional model, initial technical work, and Cabinet approval.

Phase Two will move the reform toward operationalisation, including the publication of the Jamaican Road Register and designation criteria, legislative harmonisation, establishment of the organisational structure, road inventory work, service-level arrangements, and the development of modern road standards.

That is the serious work of reform.

If SPARK is about rebuilding roads, and the Accelerated Bridge Programme is about strengthening critical crossings, then the One Road Authority is about building the institutional architecture to manage Jamaica's road network more intelligently for the future.

That is how we move from patching to planning.

From fragmented responsibility to clearer accountability.

From inconsistent standards to national benchmarks.

From short-term intervention to long-term asset management.

Madam Speaker, good works require good institutions.

And if we are serious about building a Jamaica that is stronger by design, we must be equally serious

about building the systems that make strong infrastructure possible.

THE ROAD AHEAD - STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR FY 2026/2027

Madam Speaker, having reflected on the work now underway, we must also look to the road ahead.

The Works portfolio's priorities for Fiscal Year 2026/2027 are aligned with Vision 2030 Jamaica and the Government's NEXT Chapter development agenda. They are intended to build on the momentum already created and ensure that our infrastructure programme continues to deliver greater resilience, connectivity, and economic opportunity.

Our efforts during the coming year will continue to be guided by five strategic priorities: road network rehabilitation and reconstruction; major capital infrastructure projects; bridge safety and structural resilience; climate resilience and disaster risk reduction; and stronger road safety and asset management.

Road network rehabilitation will continue through SPARK, routine maintenance, GO, emergency repairs, and targeted interventions across the island. The objective is not only to improve the visible condition of roads, but to preserve assets, protect public investment, and improve daily mobility for citizens.

Major capital infrastructure projects will remain central to economic growth, including continued progress on SCHIP, CAPEX, the Port Antonio Bypass, and the Montego Bay Perimeter Road Project. Bridge safety and structural resilience will remain a major priority as the Accelerated Bridge Programme advances and as targeted interventions continue on vulnerable crossings.

Climate resilience and disaster risk reduction will be embedded in design, drainage, slope protection, flood mitigation, emergency preparedness, and institutional planning. Hurricane Melissa reminded us that preparedness cannot be based on averages. It must be based on risk.

Digital infrastructure integration will continue where appropriate through fibre-optic ducting, monitoring tools, and improved data systems that support smarter infrastructure management.



ROAD MAINTENANCE



Madam Speaker, this is the road ahead: more disciplined planning, stronger execution, better resilience, clearer accountability, and infrastructure that serves both the present and the future.

BUDGET AND STRATEGIC CHALLENGES

Madam Speaker,
I now turn briefly to the financial position underpinning these works.
Budgets are not merely numbers.
They are choices.

ROAD MAINTENANCE

They show what a Government is prepared to prioritise, what it is prepared to fund, and what it is prepared to be judged by.

In the Works portfolio, those choices are clear.

Significant resources are being directed toward road rehabilitation, bridge replacement, drainage improvement, emergency response, major capital projects, routine maintenance, and institutional reform.

Madam Speaker, On the capital side, approximately 22 per cent of the capital budget has been expended.

The principal capital allocations include J\$4.5 billion for SPARK, J\$2.028 billion for SCHIP, J\$81.2 million for Troy Bridge, and J\$222.6 million for the dualisation of Braeton Road and Hellshire Main Road.

Total capital expenditure across these highlighted projects stood at approximately J\$1.479 billion out of a total capital provision of J\$6.833 billion.

These investments reflect the Government's continued commitment to modernising Jamaica's transport infrastructure and ensuring that major projects are advanced in a systematic and sustainable way.

Madam Speaker, On the recurrent side, approximately 25 per cent of the recurrent allocation has been expended or committed.

The recurrent programme continues to support emergency road repairs, traffic management and control, bridge development, gully cleaning, secondary road maintenance, construction and renovation works, and islandwide disaster mitigation.

These are the areas where citizens often feel the work most directly.

- A patched road.
- A cleared drain.
- A repaired signal.
- A reopened access route.



AERIAL VIEW OF TROY BRIDGE

A safer crossing.
A community reconnected after weather damage.

Madam Speaker, but while we continue to invest, we must also be honest about the pressures under which infrastructure delivery is taking place.

Limited Funding Remains a Structural Constraint

The scale of need across Jamaica's road network continues to exceed available resources. The country has approximately 27,000 kilometres of roads, and the accumulated backlog of maintenance and rehabilitation cannot be eliminated in one fiscal year, one programme, or one budget cycle.

This is why prioritisation matters.

This is why data matters.

This is why engineering assessment matters.

And this is why we must continue moving toward a more disciplined national framework for road planning and asset management.

Climate Pressures and Drainage Deficiencies

Jamaica's infrastructure is being tested more frequently and more severely by intense rainfall, flooding, storm surge, slope failure, sediment movement, and hurricane damage.

The lesson is clear: roads cannot be designed only for normal weather.

They must be designed for the climate reality Jamaica now faces.

That means stronger drainage, better slope stabilisation, more resilient bridges, improved flood protection, and a greater emphasis on preventive maintenance.

Ageing Infrastructure Requires Constant Intervention

Many of our roads, bridges, drains, and culverts were built for a different time, a different level of traffic, and different climate assumptions.

As traffic loads increase and weather events become more intense, older infrastructure requires more frequent intervention and, in many cases, complete rehabilitation or replacement.



TROY BRIDGE POST HURRICANE MELISSA

Contractor Accountability Remains an Operational Priority

Madam Speaker, let me be clear.
The Jamaican taxpayer deserves value for money.
Communities deserve quality work.

And contractors engaged to deliver public infrastructure must understand that poor workmanship, missed timelines, and substandard delivery cannot be treated as normal.

We are strengthening supervision, improving monitoring, tightening project management, and reinforcing accountability across the portfolio.
Good works require good contractors.

And where standards are not met, the Government must act in the public interest.

Heavy Vehicle Overloading Continues to Damage the Network

Excessive axle loading remains one of the most serious causes of premature pavement failure, particularly along freight-intensive corridors.

When trucks carry loads beyond what roads were designed to bear, the road deteriorates faster, maintenance costs increase, and public investment is undermined.

This issue requires stronger enforcement, better monitoring, and continued coordination across agencies.

Community Expectation Management Remains Essential

Madam Speaker, I understand the impatience of citizens.

In fact, I share it.

No Minister responsible for Works can travel Jamaica and be indifferent to the condition of roads. But impatience must be matched by disciplined execution, not careless shortcuts.

The country does not benefit from roads that are rushed, poorly drained, inadequately supervised, and quickly failed.

The country benefits when roads are properly scoped, properly designed, properly built, and properly maintained.

Madam Speaker, I raise these challenges not as excuses, but as realities that must be confronted and managed.

The responsibility of Government is not to pretend the road problem is simple.

It is to organise the resources, institutions, standards, contractors, data, and execution systems required to solve it over time.

That is why this portfolio is pursuing major programmes like SPARK, strategic investments like SCHIP and the Montego Bay Perimeter Road, bridge resilience through the Accelerated Bridge Programme, emergency interventions through GO and post-hurricane works, and institutional reform through the One Road Authority.

Taken together, these efforts reflect a serious national response to a serious national challenge.

Madam Speaker,

We are not managing decline.

We are rebuilding capacity.

We are strengthening systems.

We are confronting long-standing deficits.

And we are investing in infrastructure that supports national growth, public safety, resilience, and opportunity.

CONCLUSION

Madam Speaker, taken together, the priorities, investments, reforms, challenges, and preparations I have outlined today tell one clear story: a Government that is building under pressure, delivering within constraint, and preparing for an uncertain future with discipline and resolve.

The task before us is not small. The demands are real. The network is extensive. The expectations are high. The climate is changing. The costs are rising. But the responsibility of Government is not to retreat from difficulty. It is to confront it with clarity, strategy, and action.

At its heart, this work has never been only about asphalt, concrete, steel, machinery, or contracts. It is about people.

It is about the farmer getting produce to market. The student getting to school safely. The worker getting home to family. The entrepreneur accessing new opportunity. The community recovering faster after disaster. The motorist travelling with greater confidence. The parish, the town, and the village being better connected to the promise of national development.



OPENING OF SPRING VILLAGE BRIDGE, ST CATHERINE - JUNE 2026

We do not pretend that every road can be fixed at once. We do not pretend that every challenge has already been solved. But we can say with confidence that the direction is clear, the investments are substantial, the reforms are underway, and the work continues.

So we will continue to build deliberately and sustainably.

We will continue to maintain consistently and responsibly.

We will continue to prepare with vigilance and resolve.

And we will continue to invest in infrastructure that does more than serve the present; infrastructure that strengthens the future.

Madam Speaker, Good Works — Stronger by Design is not simply the theme of this presentation. It is the standard to which we must now hold ourselves.

Better roads. Stronger bridges. Smarter drainage. Modern systems. Clearer accountability. Greater resilience. A Jamaica better connected to itself and better prepared for the future.

That is the commitment of this Government. That is the mission of this portfolio. And with discipline, partnership, and purpose, that is the Jamaica we are building.

I thank you, **Madam Speaker**.