



September 3, 2017

Dear Fellow East Siders:

I hope you have enjoyed your summer. With the arrival of Labor Day weekend, the City government is emerging from a quiet August, with meetings scheduled to discuss a bike lane on Olney Street, future uses of the fire station on Rochambeau Avenue and priorities for school building construction and renovations.

On **Wednesday, September 13 at 6:30 p.m. at Hope High School Cafeteria**, the Planning Department will present information about a proposed bicycle lane to be added to Olney Street beginning at Hope Street and going down the hill to North Main Street. I will co-host the meeting with Councilwoman LaFortune, and refreshments will be served. The presentation will begin at 7:00, but everyone is welcome to come earlier to socialize and talk informally about City issues. The discussion about the bicycle lane will last for approximately an hour.

On **Wednesday, September 27 at 6:30 p.m. at the (former) Rochambeau Avenue Fire Station (283 Rochambeau Avenue)**, the Planning Department will hold a meeting to solicit ideas for future uses of the fire station. Once again, I will be pleased to co-host the meeting with Councilwoman LaFortune, and more refreshments will be served. I might add that I have received a few inquiries from neighborhood groups and organizations proposing ideas, so I look forward to this meeting as an opportunity to learn what you would like to see.

On **October 17, at 5:30pm at the Providence Career and Technical Academy**, the Mayor's office will host a community meeting to discuss plans and priorities for improving the facilities of the Providence Public Schools. The Mayor has engaged a consultant, Frank Locker, who has prior experience in this area. In 2006-07, he worked with the DeJong consulting company to develop a \$792 million facilities plan for the Providence Public Schools. The plan called for a comprehensive renovation of the entire inventory to current educational standards. The plan depended significantly upon the State's funding program, under which 83% of the City's approved school construction projects are reimbursed by the State. In 2007, the General Assembly imposed a moratorium on school construction projects, allowing only two projects on the City's list (Providence Career Technical Academy and Nathan Bishop) to go forward. Since that time, the State has limited funding for Providence projects to "warm, safe and dry" projects to address acute facilities issues. In 2015, the City's Director of Public Works reported to the Bond Study Commission that a smaller outlay (\$300-\$400 million) could improve the school buildings to a "B" or "B+" grade, less than ideal but also more affordable. As this history suggests, school renovation plans will need to combine assessments of the condition of the buildings, enrollment projections, educational needs and the State's willingness to provide its share of the cost.

Sincerely,