

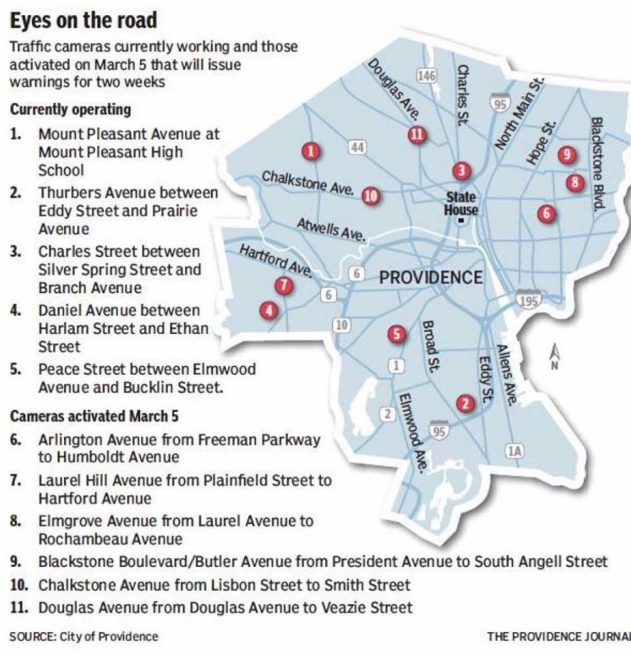
March 11, 2018

Dear Fellow East Siders:

It is a pleasure to write you from a home which has its electricity this weekend, and I am sure many of you a similar sense of gratitude. This week's letter discusses the City's response to storms with loss of electric power, the introduction of cameras to enforce the speed limits and a cost-sharing program for sidewalk repairs.

Last weekend's storm interrupted electricity for one day or longer for many East Side houses, including almost every house east of Elm Grove Avenue. Some residents did not receive their electricity until Tuesday due to trees (especially City sidewalk trees) caught in power lines. Many affected residents questioned whether the delays were due to a lack of coordination between the City (who normally is responsible for its trees) and the electric company. As a general rule, City workers will not work within live power lines for safety concerns, so the trees have to be removed either by electric company employees or by City employees after the lines have been turned off. Also, there are times when residents call the power company to obtain their power back but the power company does not contact the City regarding a downed City tree. I have introduced a resolution for Thursday's City Council meeting calling for a hearing in the Public Works Committee to review these issues and improve upon practices based on lessons learned.

Over the past few weeks, the City issued more than 12,000 speeding tickets based on cameras installed near five schools, causing an uproar. In the coming weeks, cameras will go online at three East Side locations as indicated on this map (first printed in the Providence Journal):



There is clearly a cultural issue, as too many people do not obey the City's speed limits, but the rollout of the camera program (with its \$95 tickets) is too harsh a remedy to solve this problem. The General Assembly is reviewing the program, and the City Council will be holding hearings as well to find increase compliance with speed limits in a less draconian manner.

The City has a backlog of more than 2,500 unrepaired sidewalks, only a portion of which will be addressed with the funds set aside from the \$45 million infrastructure bond. Other cities, including Pawtucket and Cranston, extend the reach of infrastructure repair funds by offering the public a "50/50" cost-sharing program. In our two neighboring cities, this is an optional program that allows participating residents to accelerate their repairs if they are willing to contribute to the cost. At Thursday's City Council meeting, I will introduce an ordinance that will authorize a cost-sharing program for Providence, setting the resident's contribution at 50% for most homeowners, but 25% for low-income homeowners. In Cranston and Pawtucket, these programs receive a separate allocation based on budgetary priorities. Given our City's large backlog of unrepaired sidewalks, this program appears to provide an opportunity to double the amount of repairs that can take place in a given year.

Sincerely,

Samuel D. Zurier