



July 10, 2016

Dear Fellow East Siders:

I hope you are enjoying your summer. This week's letter discusses two national issues, namely the impact of race on police/community relations and the quality of drinking water in our public schools, and how the City Council is addressing them in Providence. The letter also discusses a proposal to ask voter approval for an infrastructure bond.

On **Monday night, July 11 at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall**, the City Council's Special Commission on Diversity and Equity in City Employment will speak with Steven Pare, the Commissioner of Public Safety. Earlier this year, the City Council approved a [Resolution](#) to establish the commission to review the demographic and gender composition of the City's workforce, and make recommendations for further action. The fatal shootings of two African-Americans by the police in Louisiana and Minnesota, and the death of five Dallas policeman during a peaceful Black Lives Matter demonstration in Dallas this past week are only the latest examples of a painful division in contemporary society. It will take a large amount of work to address these issues along many fronts, but one place to start is to build a police force that reflects the diversity of the community it serves, both in terms of the officers on the street and the department's leadership structure. At Monday night's meeting, Commissioner Pare will review the current levels of diversity within the Police Department, as well as the Department's efforts to improve upon them.

On **Wednesday night, July 13 at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall**, the City Council's Special Committee on Education will hear an initial report on testing for lead in the water of the Providence Public Schools. Earlier this year, there were reports of water quality problems in public schools from Newark to Los Angeles. In April, the City Council approved and the Mayor signed a [Resolution](#) the requesting the School Department to collect data and present it to the Education Committee.

Last Thursday night, the administration introduced an ordinance for a \$40 million general obligation infrastructure bond. The ordinance was referred to the Finance Committee for review. If approved by the City Council, the proposal will go to the voters in November for consideration. The voters last approved an infrastructure bond in 2012, which was dedicated to repairing the City's roads. While the details have not yet been provided, the current proposal is likely to allow for infrastructure spending over a broader range of projects, such as roads, sidewalks, parks, sewers, bridges and City building. Last year, the City Council's Bond Study Commission issued a [Report](#) that provides an overview of the City's infrastructure needs and available capital finance resources. In recent months, the administration organized a working group (on which I was pleased to serve) to frame these infrastructure needs and resources within a 10-year plan. In the coming months, the working group will complete its work and issue a report to support this year's bond proposal and others to follow in the coming years.

Sincerely,