



July 23, 2017

Dear Fellow East Siders:

As we enjoy these (to use the singer Raffi's words) "hot hot days in July", this week's letter discusses the infrastructure bond, the State budget and proposed bicycle lanes on Olney Street

At its meeting this past Thursday, the City Council approved a \$45 million infrastructure bond largely based on the general framework of the [Capital Improvement Plan](#) the administration submitted with its 2017-18 budget. The spending plan includes \$20 million to repair roads and \$3 million to repair sidewalks. The favorable interest rate climate likely will generate a "bond premium" permitting an additional \$3 million of projects to be funded. Because the City Council held up the bond when it was originally approved by the voters last November, we have lost approximately \$2 million in funding capacity due to higher interest rates. With that said, the principle of "better late than never" still applies.

At a July 19 meeting of the Finance Committee, the Superintendent described the impact of the State budget impasse on the Providence Public Schools. The July State aid payment was approximately \$350,000 less than what the partially approved State budget, and if not addressed soon, the August payment (and all that follow) will be more than \$1.3 million short each month. The School Department essentially has a window of two weeks for the General Assembly to resolve its budget issues, after which it will be forced to make difficult choices that will impair the quality of our public schools. With that in mind, the City Council approved a [Resolutoin](#) I introduced urging the General Assembly to approve at least the State school aid budget immediately (if not sooner). Fortunately, Providence is not the only community faced with difficult choices pegged to an August 1 deadline, so the General Assembly leadership is hearing from many quarters on this issue.

Last Wednesday, the Planning Department's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission reviewed a [Staff Report](#) that maps out a bicycle lane on either side of Olney Street between Hope and North Main. Following current design principles, the bicycle lane is designed to go against the curb, with parking lane to the left of the bicycles, and a driving lane to the left of the parked cars. The creation of the bicycle lane would remove several parking spots on Olney Street; however, the Planning Department has determined that there are sufficient available spots nearby. I will work with the Planning Department to schedule a neighborhood meeting sometime in September to present the current version of the plan for comment by members of our neighborhood.

The City Council will be in recess for the month of August. Thank you for your interest in City issues, and I look forward to getting back in touch with you in September.

Sincerely,