Quality public infrastructure supports economic development - by James Moran

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James Moran, City of
East Providence

One important component in promoting a vibrant community that supports economic vitality and growth, is a city's commitment to providing high quality infrastructure in support of economic development. Nationally, the condition of our public infrastructure has been in steady decline as our roadways and bridges in particular, age and maintenance in many cases has been deferred. Many of our most heavily traveled roadways and bridges in the northeast are in substandard condition and in dire need of maintenance or, in many cases, a complete rebuild or replacement.

Improvements to our city's public infrastructure both state and locally funded, have been a major priority and we have seen some prominent success stories recently that play an important role in promoting our city as a great place to locate or expand a business.

Waterfront Dr., which includes the Waterfront Dr. corridor extending from Bold Point to Dexter Rd., represents the centerpiece of the city's redevelopment efforts and is the primary corridor for redevelopment of our waterfront. This roadway will generate significant economic investment in the coming years. The city will continue to lobby the state to complete the northern connection to Pawtucket to further economic investment in the Rumford section of our city.

In addition, East Providence has seen several important bridge replacement projects associated with our I-195 corridor that carry thousands of vehicles per day in on out of Providence and East Providence. Major bridge replacement plans for connections to the East Shore Expressway and at Pawtucket Avenue have occurred and are providing smoother and more efficient commutes for drivers throughout the East Bay. These new bridges, with expected lifespans of fifty to sixty years, are important to commerce not only for East Providence but for the State and our region.

Commercial corridor enhancements have also been a high priority for the city. The Warren Ave. enhancement project, the most recently completed effort, has spruced up an aging corridor and has served as a mechanism for improving local pride in our community. Similar improvements are being planned for Watchemoket Sq. including pedestrian wayfinding signage and other physical enhancement and multimodal improvements that will breathe vibrancy into the Sq.. A new sculpture

park currently under construction will also be a beautiful addition to the Sq.

Those interested in learning more about the economic development activities occurring in East Providence are encouraged to visit the city's website at www.eastprovidencebusiness.com or the city's Waterfront District website at www.eastprovidencewaterfront.com.

James Moran is the economic planner for the City of East Providence, R.I.