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Warwick's infrastructure is key to growth, safety, and business vitality - by Frank Picozzi

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As we know, good infrastructure is key not only to the public's health and safety, but to ensure the continued growth and vitality of a community's business development and economy. To this end, efforts at the local and state levels are helping to ensure that Warwick's roads, bridges, and other infrastructure assets are being repaired or replaced.

Frank Picozzi

Warwick's FY22 budget has included funding for an \$800,000 broadband initiative. Co-sponsored by the police department and information technology department, the program also comprises other municipal departments, including the public school system. American Rescue Act funding has also enabled the city to invest an additional \$10 million in sorely needed infrastructure expansion and upgrades for the municipal water and sewer systems. The city is also investing in new equipment to replace aging and failing vehicles in a number of departments.

The state department of transportation is likewise making long-overdue enhancements to and replacing roads and bridges throughout the state. Here in Warwick, a \$25.3 million project, now completed, saw the full rebuilding of the Centerville and Toll Gate road bridges on I-95. Elsewhere, crews are working on the replacement of the Division St. Bridge on the Warwick/East Greenwich line. This \$22.9 million project entails the replacement of a bridge over Rte. 4 that's classified as deficient in order to ensure the safe passage of the roughly 14,000 vehicles that pass by each day.

Rte. 37 provides a critically-important link between the cities of Warwick and Cranston, interstate freeways, and the many retail, residential, and office buildings in proximity to this east-west thoroughfare in both communities. It's also an important connection to the Rhode Island T.F. Green International Airport, located in the heart of Warwick. This project, which began in 2020, calls for improvements to 22 bridges, including substantial repairs or full replacement, and is meant to ease congestion and improve safety for the roughly 42,000 vehicles that traverse the highway daily. The project, broken into two separate phases, carries a total projected price tag of \$164.5 million and is slated for completion in 2023.

With more than 80 retailers, 12 eateries, the newly-opened, 12-screen Apple Cinemas and other businesses on its property, Warwick Mall is a destination for local and out-of-town shoppers alike. The mall and the beautifully renovated Pontiac Mill, which offers a mix of residential and commercial uses just across the street, attract thousands of people to the area, making a rehab of the Rte. 5 corridor (Greenwich Ave./Lambert Lind Hwy.) very important. The \$19.9 million project, now underway, calls for replacement of the Pontiac Bridge – a four-lane structure that spans over the Pawtuxet River – and enhancements that include reconfiguration of the Knight St. interchange to make it more convenient for area residents and travelers. Installation of new signals, sidewalks and curbs as well as some resurfacing and other minor repairs are also part of the project. Its completion is expected next year, providing better travel for the roughly 21,000 vehicles that pass through the area each day.

Elsewhere in the city, the popular McDermott Pool has now reopened, after extensive repairs and refurbishment were completed, and work is now underway to repair the therapeutic pool, or "hot

pool” as it’s called by many residents. And a \$200,000 allocation is planned for each of Warwick’s nine city council wards. Councilors plan to hold neighborhood meetings to solicit input from their constituents to determine how to best and most effectively allocate those resources – all part of the plan to invest in the community for the benefit of residents and businesses alike.

If you’re interested in learning more about Warwick, its services and business community, or are considering a move here, please contact the Department of Economic Development at (401) 738-2014, or email econ.dir@warwickri.com.

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