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City of East Providence invests in public safety - by Roberto DaSilva

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Roberto DaSilva

The City of East Providence maintains a high quality of life with a thriving business community, desirable residential areas, abundant culture and recreational activities and more. These characteristics are all bolstered by the city's ongoing investments in public safety.

The city's police station renovations are an example of these investments, paid for through a Rhode Island Pandemic Recovery Office grant and the city's ARPA funding. This project will fund design and construction of these much-needed renovations to the 40-year-old facility. These improvements will enhance the facility's functionality, improve security measures and provide a safer and more effective working environment for law enforcement personnel and the public. The station's indoor shooting range, deemed unusable due to lead contamination will be remediated and repurposed into usable space.

Another recent investment is the city's new Public Safety Communications Center. This state-of-the-art facility opened at its new location in April 2023. The facility's opening completed a project that stalled two decades ago, leading to municipal space sitting unused. The center's relocation from the police station created additional usable space in that facility. Public safety communications are a critical link in the city's emergency response network and this facility will help keep residents and first responders safe into the future.

The East Providence Fire Department is the recent recipient of a \$3.75 million Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. These funds will be used to recruit and retain 12 new firefighters. This increase in firefighter staffing levels helps increase public safety and expands emergency response capabilities throughout the city.

The East Providence Fire Department is also using ARPA funding to purchase new turnout gear to protect the health and wellness of its personnel. The fire department will now become the first in the state to wear fire equipment free from polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). PFAS, which are often referred to as "forever chemicals," a known carcinogen that has been linked to numerous adverse health effects. This PFAS-free gear will better protect the men and women who deliver these services for our residents.

These investments, and others, continue East Providence's reputation as a safe and livable community. Our administration is proud of the work of our first responders and is committed to providing the highest level of public safety services to our residents and visitors.

Roberto DaSilva is the mayor of the city of East Providence, R.I.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540