



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN J. LOMBARDI *District 8*
Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Committee on Small Business

October 27, 2016

Honorable Gina M. Raimondo
Governor
State House, Room 224
82 Smith Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Dear Governor Raimondo:

I write to you today regarding "Fixing Routes 6 & 10" in Providence. As you know, these roads are broken—both structurally deficient and failing the surrounding neighborhoods and regional commuters.

I fully understand your announcement of last month to "fast track" improvements to the 6-10 connector—public safety is a public concern for all those involved. The 6-10 connector and its many bridges have suffered from decades of neglect leading to the current situation where they are held up by temporary supports. However, I believe that rebuilding the connector "as is" would be a major lost opportunity for the City and State to improve transportation infrastructure, reduce long-term maintenance burdens, enhance public health and the environment and strengthen the low-income, minority communities which surround it.

As you are aware, at several of the RIDOT and Providence Planning Department-sponsored events this year citizens of Cranston, Johnston and the Providence neighborhoods of Olneyville, West End, Federal Hill, Silver Lake, Hartford, Valley and Smith Hill have expressed a strong desire for a change to the current design of the 6-10 Connector.

From a City-sponsored forum this past spring, we learned from numerous national and international examples what is possible when we re-examine our forgotten transportation corridors with people-centered urban design and an openness to innovation. Whether unearthing our lost rivers to re-ignite the heart of the city or moving a highway to open up opportunities for new economic growth, Providence and Rhode Island have a history of doing big, innovative infrastructure projects.

While the proposed solutions may vary, there is broad consensus that the 6-10 Connector can do far more for its surrounding communities. It can be reimagined as a thoroughfare that better integrates public life with the promise of dynamic urban spaces, new development opportunities, well-integrated and sustainable means of transport, and revitalized neighborhoods. The opportunity at this moment is not only address immediate public safety needs, but in the words of Providence Mayor Jorge Elorza—to "transform the heart of the City".

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Governor Raimondo, please stop the fast tracking of the 6-10 Connector! Please stop the current effort to replace the 6-10 in kind and work with the cities of Providence, Cranston, Johnston and their citizens to build a better future for the 6-10 and its surrounding communities!

As you know, the City of Providence and the Providence Planning Department have committed to facilitating a public process that includes an alternative design for the 6-1- Connector developed with the consultant Utile Design. We issue this public letter in support of these efforts.

- I fully endorse the public process currently underway which is meaningfully integrating the ideas and concerns of the affected stakeholders and invite the State to more actively engage in that process.
- I support the Utile Plan released on October 3rd and the commitment to continue to improve the proposed plan by incorporating public feedback from citizens in Providence and surrounding communities.
- I also endorse a phased plan which allows the State to address immediate safety needs while replacing the connector in stages over the next ten years with an improved design with budget. Spending 1-2% of the total projected \$400 million cost on temporary shoring over the next year to ensure the State receives a positive return on investment is money well spent.

Make no mistake-this is a pivotal moment in the history of our state and its capital city. Any work on the 6-10 Connector will have a lasting impact on the City of Providence. The question is whether this project will leave a legacy of divided communities, long-term maintenance costs, environmental injustices, depressed property values and long-term health outcomes for those adjacent to the highway. Or could it help shape a future that includes economically and socially vibrant communities, healthy, safe and environmentally-conscious means of transportation and dynamic public spaces?

The citizens of Providence and its surrounding communities, as well as all the members of the coalition, would be delighted to work with you and your designated representative as well as the City of Providence to take advantage of this amazing opportunity.

Sincerely,

John J. Lombardi
State Representative
District-8