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UPPER AQUIDNECK AVENUE UPGRADES ON TAP

MIDDLETOWN, R.I. (MARCH 22, 2022) – Consider the \$9 million upper Aquidneck Avenue road reconstruction project officially underway.

On Tuesday afternoon from 850 Aquidneck Avenue, the state Department of Transportation and area officials came together to celebrate the project with a ceremonial groundbreaking as traffic streamed by on the busy street.

As part of the 18-month effort, new drainage, sidewalks, American Disabilities Act and pavement will be put in between East Main Road to Green End Avenue by Cardi Construction Corp. Surveying is ongoing now, with the more visible mobilization work expected in the next month or two.

When done, the goal is to make the entire area safer for motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists. While work was ongoing, DOT officials say the aim is to make sure businesses and neighbors are impacted as little as possible.

“Aquidneck Avenue infrastructure is a project that’s been long thought out and we’re finally putting the shovel in the ground...” DOT Director Peter Alviti Jr. said. “For every one dollar of state money we put into projects like this, (federal support covers) the other \$4. They pay 80 percent of these kinds of projects.



Systematically over the past two decades, the state — led by the Rhode Island Department of Transportation — has invested heavily in the roads and infrastructure of Middletown.

Among the highlights include intersection upgrades at Two Mile Corner where East Main and West Main roads meet as well as Coddington Highway and West Main Road nearby. Long stretches of East Main and West Main roads themselves have also been redone, all at no cost to the Town.

Troublesome intersections across the community — like Green End Avenue and Valley Road or East Main Road and Aquidneck Avenue — have also been reworked and made safer too.

And that work doesn't include the new sidewalks along many state streets and drainage work. There was also a high-profile stormwater project between the Town, DOT and several other stakeholders to improve the quality of runoff into Bailey Brook through Middletown Valley.

Because of the relationships it's built over the years, the Town enjoys a strong working alliance with the DOT. To help move important state road projects up the priority list, the Town has paid for engineering work and the replacement of a water line to speed along construction.

In his opening remarks, Alviti credited some of those on hand like U.S. Congressman David Cicilline and State Sen. Louis P. DiPalma for their yeoman efforts to making Tuesday's event a reality.



As part of the work, Alviti said the road will be stripped completely and redone entirely, thereby extending the useful life of the surface for decades, not years.

Unbeknownst to many, he said the Aquidneck Avenue project is the first road that will be paved as part of a significant statewide "push" to upgrade and update infrastructure across Rhode Island. Over the next five years, Alviti said \$422 million in state money will be spent around the Ocean State to improve road surfaces.

Echoing comments of other DOT officials, Alviti said every consideration would be made to make sure the work had a minimum impact on the Aquidneck Avenue business community.

As the road work gets closer, DOT officials said they would be working closely with Middletown to minimize any interruptions.

“These projects really epitomize the way government should work, from the federal level with the federal funding all the way to the state and local level...” Alviti said. “The support we get from the (state) Senate and the House is vital to these projects. That \$1 of state money for every \$8 of federal money is not easy to decision makers. I want to thank you for supporting our infrastructure.”



Cicilline said he was happy to help, especially with such an important road like Aquidneck Avenue, which sees about 16,000 vehicle trips a day. He also said the work will promote better access to Middletown and beyond, create important jobs and help Rhode Island repair its aging infrastructure.

“This is exactly the type of project that we need to undertake in our state,” Cicilline said. “These are high quality infrastructure projects and investments that support multiple forms of transportation that really strengthen our economy and improve our quality of life.”

DiPalma said he remembered the days close to two decades ago when he was on the Town Council and the upper Aquidneck Avenue project was on the state improvement list back then. Remarking to the crowd on hand, DiPalma credited Councilwoman M. Theresa Santos and her persistence for helping the project cross the finish line.



“It’s about investment in the economy, investment in jobs, it’s the right thing to do,” DiPalma said.

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