



Mayor of Providence

Jorge O. Elorza

September 15, 2017

The Honorable Member of the Providence City Council  
Providence City Hall  
25 Dorrance Street  
Providence, RI 02903

RE: Bike Lane Resolution

Honorable Members of the City Council,

I am writing to inform you that I have vetoed the recent Council resolution requesting a full traffic and economic impact study whenever bike lanes are planned and implemented.

I recognize that this Council resolution is a formal request and the administration is not legally bound to change our processes, whether I veto it or not. However, I believe that the resolution is sending a public message contrary to both our city's policy and to prior Council actions supporting Complete Streets. These Complete Street measures enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. While I remain committed to working with the Councilmembers to address any concerns they have heard from constituents, there are more appropriate and practicable avenues to do so.

Under my administration, the City has made the decision-making process behind bicycle lane projects more transparent and inclusive through the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC). In this process, traffic studies are typically conducted when the implementation of bike lanes reduces the number of vehicular travel lanes along a street. When no such change in lanes or other significant change in traffic patterns would occur, it would be a waste of city resources to conduct additional traffic studies.

When BPAC meetings to review potential bike lane projects occur, the City also notifies local stakeholders including merchants and invites them to public hearings to voice input. We are also more than happy to conduct or participate in other neighborhood meetings, and have done so related to bike lanes on numerous occasions.

Furthermore, economic impact studies generally show that bike lanes are, if anything, positive for business. It does not make sense to conduct such a study every time we determine that a new bike lane should be installed. To the extent that bike lanes are proposed in areas where they are not a good fit for the surrounding area, we have decided not to put them in and will continue to carefully consider all of the relevant factors in making these decisions.

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Phone (401) 421-7740 Fax (401) 274-8240

Safety studies universally show that bike lanes dramatically reduce the number of, severity of, and likelihood of crashes and deaths. The City has a responsibility to keep bike riders safe, just as we need to do our best to keep drivers, pedestrians, wheelchair users and transit users safe on our City streets.

We will continue to deploy robust community engagement processes when implementing bike lanes. For example, we have heard from small business owners who feared losing public parking spaces as a result of new bike lanes. We have reassured them that such is not the case, and any new measures would take into account the local community's needs. I look forward to continuing to work with you to address the concerns of businesses and residents, and to do what we can to enact Complete Streets for all users, and support a vibrant and safe City for everyone.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'J' and 'E' that are connected. The signature is written over the printed name 'Jorge O. Elorza'.

Jorge O. Elorza  
Mayor



# RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL

No.

WHEREAS, In 2016, Mayor Elorza signed into law an executive order creating a review process for new bicycle lanes in the City of Providence; and

WHEREAS, Under this review process, all “significant street, sidewalk, or trail repair or construction projects” will be presented to the Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC) for review in order to determine if the installation of a bicycle lane would be appropriate; and

WHEREAS, “Significant” refers to streets and paths designated as needing improvements in the City’s Bicycle Master Plan, any street categorized as an arterial or collector road, or any project within 300 feet of a school or recreation center; and

WHEREAS, As the installation of bike lanes can necessitate major changes to traffic patterns, it is vital that the effects of those changes be taken into account when weighing the costs and benefits of installing a bike lane; and

WHEREAS, However, in the review process established by the mayor, no traffic impact study is conducted prior to making the decision to install a bicycle lane; and

WHEREAS, Even after the decision to add a bicycle lane or path has been made, under the current review process, a traffic impact study is not required; and

WHEREAS, Moreover, no economic impact study or cost-benefit analysis is currently conducted to determine how changes to traffic patterns will impact economic development in the corridors where planned bike lanes will be installed; and

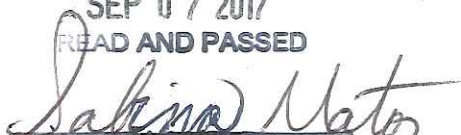
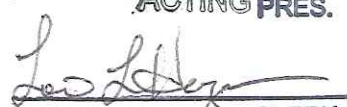
WHEREAS, Many constituents have expressed concern that creation of bike lanes, particularly in commercial corridors, will result in loss of parking spaces, negatively affecting nearby businesses and lowering quality of life for residents; and

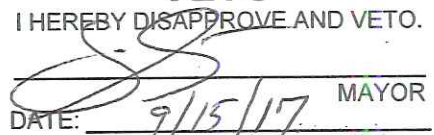

WHEREAS, Without information on how bicycle lanes will impact traffic, parking, and economic development, BPAC and other decision-makers cannot fully weigh the costs and benefits of proposed new bike lanes; and

WHEREAS, As the elected representatives of the people of Providence, the Providence City Council has an obligation to ensure that all street improvement projects provide benefits to residents that outweigh their costs.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Providence City Council respectfully requests that the City Traffic Engineer, Director of the Department of Public Works, and the Parking Administrator conduct and make available for public review and comment full traffic impact and economic impact studies prior to deciding whether to construct new bicycle lanes.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That, upon passage, copies of this resolution be sent to the Traffic Engineer, Director of the Department of Public Works, the Parking Administrator, and the Mayor.

CITY COUNCIL  
SEP 07 2017  
READ AND PASSED  
  
ACTING PRES.  
  
CLERK

**VETO**  
I HEREBY DISAPPROVE AND VETO.  
  
DATE: 9/15/17 MAYOR  
October 16, 2017  
MAYOR'S VETO  
SUSTAINED  
  
CLERK