

# TOWN OF DOVER

## Office of the Mayor

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*James P. Dodd – Mayor*

Dear Dover Resident and Friend,

I write to inform you of important information. The New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) and New Jersey Transit (NJT) decided to close the Prospect Street Bridge in Dover due to safety concerns on November 25, 2014 without prior notice to Town officials. Town officials are stunned by the last minute decision to close the bridge as they presented the NJDOT and NJT with concerns about its structural integrity in 2010. After four years of dealing with the State's roadblocks, the concern is the mysteriousness with which the State has conducted itself with this important public safety issue.

While Town officials are pleased the problems with the bridge will finally get the attention it needs, the utter lack of planning and pure incompetence of State level departments with respect to this situation raises significant questions about their ability to effectively execute this project. This bridge connects Prospect Street to Blackwell Street and spans the gap above the train tracks and handles thousands of vehicles and scores of pedestrians on a daily basis.

Prospect Street is a major thoroughfare that serves the historic business district and many commuters who use it to cross from Routes 15, 80, and 46 to Route 10 and neighboring communities in addition to serving residents of Dover's Second Ward. The disruption of this vital roadway to local residents and commuters in the absence of an implemented comprehensive traffic plan, which includes signage for detours, re-timing traffic signals in the historic business district, and providing notice to residents, has already unnecessarily produced gridlock conditions.

In an urbanized traffic environment like Dover's business district, the Prospect Street Bridge does not exist in a vacuum; the closure of this bridge will have a domino effect on other areas causing congestion until a proper plan is developed and implemented. Moreover, since State level officials failed to make necessary plans since the municipality put them on notice about the need to repair or replace the bridge back in 2010, there is no construction schedule in place, meaning the bridge is closed by order of NJT until further notice.

The central issue is the State's unexplained four-year delay in putting this project out to bid, which has resulted in this unplanned closure before construction. If the State had acted upon recommendations of the municipality in 2010, the bridge closing would not have happened until a contractor had been selected and a construction schedule put into place. However, now the State has left us with an "open ended" closure that will inconvenience everyone who uses that roadway without a project termination date.

The closure of this bridge without proper planning is a poignant example of the State's complete disregard for the residents of our community and I simply will not tolerate that kind of disrespect towards our businesses and residents. I vow to take the fight for an appropriate plan and effective implementation, and an expedited construction timeline all the way to Trenton, if necessary.

Please assist me by reaching out to the contacts listed below to express your concern and me in seeking a comprehensive plan with an expedited construction schedule.

Ms. Deborah Hirt, NJDOT Community Relations--609-530-2110 or email at [Deborah.hirt@dot.nj.gov](mailto:Deborah.hirt@dot.nj.gov)

John DelColle NJT Government Relations--973-491-8073 or email at [jdelcolle@njtransit.com](mailto:jdelcolle@njtransit.com)

As always, I remain honored and humbled to serve you as your Mayor. Thank you for your kind attention to this matter.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "James P. Dodd". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

James P. Dodd  
Mayor