



Rhode Island Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council

Update on Rhode Island Planning Projects

Presented to: EC4 Advisory Board, August 28, 2024

Moving Forward RI 2050: Limited Update of the Rhode Island's Long Range Transportation Plan

The Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning (RIDSP) is working on a limited update of our state's long-range transportation plan (LRTP). The LRTP is a Federally required plan that sets the vision for our state's multi-modal transportation system - our roads, bridges, public transit, bike paths, sidewalks, ports, and more, over a minimum of 20 years. Moving Forward RI 2040 was approved in December of 2020 – this project will update that plan with new data and trends, with new sections based on new requirements and evolving needs, and with any changes to the goals, strategies, and projects.

Share your experiences and opinions by taking a [survey](#).

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Rhode Island Complete Streets Plan and Design Guide

Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning (RIDSP), in partnership with Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) and Rhode Island Public Transit Agency (RIPTA), is developing a plan and guide for both State and municipal governments to build transportation projects that are “complete” – user friendly, safe, and accessible for all roadway users, thereby creating a healthier, greener, and more equitable roadway system. The plan will include Complete Streets policy recommendations, implementation guidance, and design guidelines.

You can provide your feedback on this Plan by attending public workshops for the long-range transportation plan, Moving Forward RI 2050, where one of the feedback stations will be focused on complete streets.

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Rhode Island Safe Streets for All

In 2022, RIPTA was awarded funding from the [Safe Streets for All \(SS4A\) program](#) to develop roadway Safety Action Plans on behalf of the state of Rhode Island, and with collaboration from 32 municipalities. The project will include a three-tiered analysis of road safety, including both past crash analysis and predictive analysis, and a wide-reaching community engagement process, with a statewide survey,

interactive website, and on-the-ground outreach in each participating community. Ultimately the data analysis and public engagement will feed into the Safety Action Plans and inform recommendations for transportation system improvements in each community.

The project timeline runs from April 2024 – June 2025, with the majority of data analysis and public engagement occurring in the summer of 2024, and the municipal plans completed by early spring 2025. This planning process will set up the participating municipalities to be eligible for future implementation funding through the federal SS4A program.

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Metro Connector Alternatives Analysis

[Transit Forward RI 2040](#), Rhode Island's statewide Transit Master Plan, was adopted into the [State Guide Plan](#) in 2020. The Plan identified that much of metropolitan Providence has very high underlying demand for transit which rivals that found along existing light rail and bus rapid transit corridors in much larger cities across the US. Two corridors were identified that connect such areas of high demand and that run north-south across the Providence metropolitan region, extending from the Central Falls/Cumberland border through Pawtucket, downtown Providence, Cranston and Warwick.

The purpose of the Metro Connector Study is to consider options for providing fast, reliable, and frequent transit that connects major transportation hubs, regional activity centers, and residential neighborhoods in metropolitan Providence while achieving other State goals related to climate, sustainable housing growth, and economic development in an equitable manner.

The goal of this Study is to determine a locally preferred alternative (LPA) for High-Capacity Transit on the possible corridors. These LPAs would identify a preferred alignment, mode, stop locations, approximate ridership, and construction and operational costs. The LPAs should be implementable and developed to the point where they can move into project development. A public engagement process is expected to be in early September.

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Rail Passenger Survey

RIDOT undertakes a rail passenger survey every two to three years in order to better understand demand for services and performance. Rail passengers can expect to be asked to take a short online survey about where they began their journey, where they are traveling to, how often they take the train, their experience, and a little about themselves. Surveys and sampling will take place between April and October 2025.

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East Providence Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Project

The City's first Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan will take a comprehensive look at East Providence's active transportation network, use best practices and objective analysis to determine how public rights-of-way can be used to achieve City goals more effectively, and develop an implementation strategy that sets a clear and achievable path for future investments. The Plan will reflect the goals and objectives of Moving Forward RI 2040, the State's Long-Range Transportation Plan. It will reflect the long-term vision and build upon the guidance from the RI Bicycle Mobility Plan (2020). The City of East Providence Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan will identify and address the significant need for multimodal connections throughout the city. Creating a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan is important for improving safety, intermodal connectivity, and addressing equity by prioritizing active transportation options within low-income and EJ neighborhoods. Creating more walkable and bikeable neighborhoods also improves the quality of life for all residents, visitors, and people who work in the city, by activating neighborhood centers and creating vibrant public street life. The proposed plan would provide recommendations on where to add bicycle lanes, cross walks, sidewalks, bus shelters, and additional safety treatments. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan will advance mobility for all transportation users.

This Master Plan project has an 18-month timeline and will kick off in August of 2024 and be completed by the Spring of 2026

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Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) is conducting an online survey (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2024SCORPUpdate-GeneralPublicSurvey>) to gather public input on outdoor recreation opportunities in Rhode Island. Feedback from the survey will be used to inform the Rhode Island Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) to help create improved outdoor opportunities for residents and visitors and prioritize funding for future outdoor recreation projects over the next five years. Participants who submit the survey can choose to be entered in a random drawing to win a free [2025 RI State Beach Parking Pass](#). The survey is open to all Rhode Islanders and only takes a few minutes to complete. **The survey will be open through Monday, September 30.**

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Solid Waste Management Plan

The Solid Waste Management Plan, Solid Waste 2038, will be updated over the next year. This plan guides the Division of Planning, the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation, and the Department of Environmental Management in all major solid waste areas. The update will begin to develop plans for emerging solid waste components including lithium-ion batteries and solar panels. A contract is being finalized and outreach will begin in the Fall. The plan draft is expected by the end of 2025.

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Resilient Rhody 2.0

Resilient Rhody, the state's Climate Change Resilience Plan, will be undergoing a two-phase update process. Executive Order 23-07 requires the Chief Resilience Officer to develop a State of Resilience Report by end of 2024. The Act on Coasts, passed in the 2024 legislative session, requires that a Statewide Resilience Plan be developed by the end of 2025. The 2024 Report will provide an overview of Rhode Island's most current climate resilience data; statewide initiatives, standards, and measures of success; and local resilience needs. The 2025 plan will build upon this report with particular focus on statewide needs, goals, strategies, and resilience best practices. Engagement will occur in 3 parts – state government agencies are engaged through the Resilience EC4 Subgroup (launched July 2024), non-governmental entities (non-profits, universities, private sector) will be engaged through the RI Resilience Partner Group (launching August 2024), and municipalities & communities are engaged through Municipal Resilience Core Teams (annual municipal resilience updates held with cities & towns May 2024).

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Resilient Rhody Municipal Resilience Program

Municipalities are engaged in local climate resilience planning through the Municipal Resilience Program. Offered in collaboration by RI Infrastructure Bank, The Nature Conservancy, and RI Department of Environmental Management, the program offers cities & towns Community Resilience Building (CRB) workshops, resilience technical assistance, and grants for project implementation. Through the CRB workshop process, TNC works with a local Municipal Resilience Core Team (3-5 representatives from the municipality – ex. leadership, staff, community members) to facilitate a townwide resilience workshop for identifying local strengths, vulnerabilities, and priority resilience actions. TNC then compiles this information into a Summary of Findings report that serves as the municipality's local climate resilience plan. To date, 38/39 municipalities have joined the MRP, completed resilience workshops, and been designated *Resilient Rhody* Municipalities. The program aims to reach 100% statewide participation by end of 2024. The program has been identified for FEMA funding that will allow for resilience workshop renewals to be offered beginning early 2025, streamlined with local Hazard Mitigation Planning processes – this second round will be more strongly focused on community attendees, and will introduce two Community Representatives to each Municipal Resilience Core Team.

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Designing for Resilience

The Designing for Resilience initiative, provided by RI Infrastructure Bank, RI Department of Environmental Management, Save the Bay, The Nature Conservancy, and Weston & Sampson, provides environmental consulting and conceptual design assistance for priority municipal resilience projects that are not yet ready-to-proceed. The Designing for Resilience team works with municipalities to review existing maps and plans, facilitate a site visit, complete site analysis and nature-based project scoping, engage community stakeholders, and complete conceptual design & cost-estimates (or cost equivalent design & engineering services). Site visits offer municipal staff opportunity to share detail with the

design team about experienced challenges and site context, opportunities, and constraints. Climate resilience factors, including intense precipitation, storm surge, and sea level rise; extreme air and water temperatures; and changing biodiversity are evaluated for each site, and best practices of resilient design are applied. Community stakeholders are engaged at the draft conceptual design stage to allow for participation in and contribution to the decision-making process, and include representatives from local Environmental Justice communities. For the first round of Designing for Resilience assistance (2024), assistance has been offered to Providence, Cumberland, East Greenwich, and Warren – at this stage, preliminary site visits have been held and community engagement is being planned. Additional municipalities are in need of this assistance, and the team hopes to continue to expand the initiative.

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