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## Section 7: Public Hearing Report

## 30-Day Public Comment Period

The Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning (RIDSP), in collaboration with RIDOT and RIPTA, have prepared this Public Comment Report related to the FFY 2022 – 2031 STIP. The STIP presents a 10-year program for transportation projects from federal fiscal year (FFY) 2022 to 2031, the first four years of which (FFY 2022-2025) are fiscally constrained.

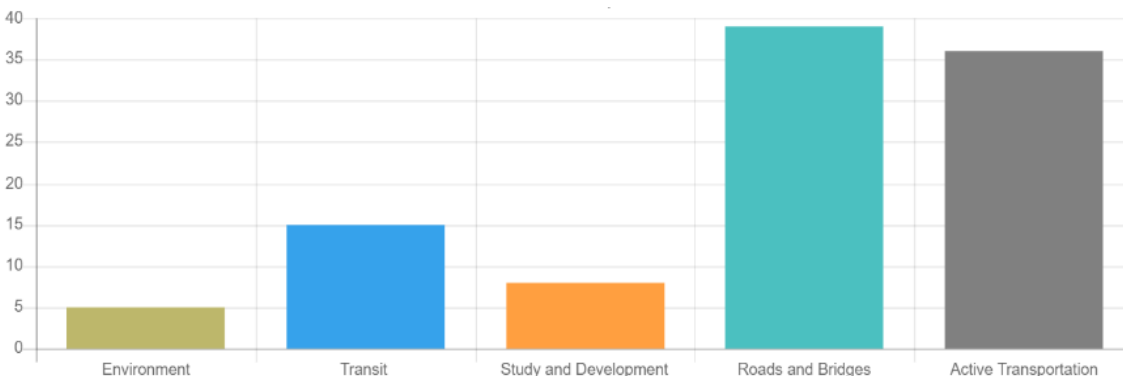
Notice of the draft FFY 2022-2031 STIP and opportunity for the public to provide comments was provided on June 10, 2021. The notice was distributed in English and Spanish through a posting on the Rhode Island Secretary of State website, a posting on the Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning website, posting at Kennedy Plaza, and through email notice to over 1,400 stakeholders.

The State Planning Council’s Transportation Advisory Committee held two public hearings to accept comments on the draft FFY 2022-2031 STIP. The first public hearing was held at Narragansett Town Hall on June 29, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. and the second was held at RI Department of Administration in Providence on June 30, 2021 at 3:30 pm. The public hearings were accessible to individuals with disabilities. Any individual with physical or sensory impairments requiring assistance for a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in the remote hearing was able to make requests for accommodation prior to the hearing. Translation services were also available to those in need.

Division of Statewide Planning staff have compiled all of the comments received and have provided responses to the comments. RIDSP, RIDOT and RIPTA addressed the public comments applicable to their areas of expertise and indicated if recommended changes will be incorporated into the draft FFY 2022-2031 STIP.

## Summary of Comments

The 32-day public comment period was open from June 10, 2021 until July 12, 2021 at 4:00 PM EST. Comments were accepted on the online SmartComment portal, by email, and via oral testimony at the public hearings. Staff received 102 comments in total, with most mentioning Active Transportation and Roadways and Bridges. Other topic areas discussed included Transit, Environment, and Study and Development. Over 100 individuals, 13 municipalities, 6 organizations and 1 university provided written comment submissions. A detailed response to each comment is included in the Public Comments and Responses section of this report.



## Public Comments and Responses

The following is a record of all written comments received during the 32-day public review and comment period, as well as oral comments offered at the public hearing. After each comment, a formal response is provided.

### **I-1: Tom Padwa**

**City:** Warren

**Submit Date:** 06/19/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

#### **Comment I-1-1**

Please do whatever you can to see that all bus lines which currently run through Kennedy Plaza continue to do so. The so-called "multi-hub" proposal is a dis-service to rides.

#### **Response to I-1-1**

The Providence Multi-Hub Project [STIP ID 5204] is included in the STIP, programmed for FFY 2022. This line item supports the creation of expanded, state-of-the-art transportation centers and bus hubs serving rail and bus passengers throughout the City of Providence. The project will establish a strategic hub in the Innovation District, enhance connectivity to the Providence Train Station, and reconfigure Kennedy Plaza.

The creation of a multi-hub system brings many benefits to the transit network, including alleviating congestion at a single-hub and allowing for the physical improvement of pedestrian and transit amenities at several locations. Operationally, the multi-hub system is also not expected to negatively impact bus service to and from Kennedy Plaza as 99.8% of the current passengers that take a 1-seat ride to Kennedy Plaza and downtown Providence can continue to do so once the project is in place.

More information can be found here: [https://www.dot.ri.gov/about/who/docs/Multi-Hub\\_Press\\_Update\\_11-20.pdf](https://www.dot.ri.gov/about/who/docs/Multi-Hub_Press_Update_11-20.pdf).

### **I-2: Joel Maxwell**

**City:** LITTLE COMPTON

**Submit Date:** 06/21/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

#### **Comment I-2-1**

Hi - The dashboard is great! Great transparency to be able to see and comment on the planned projects! Thanks!

I'd like to comment on a few projects in Little Compton, specifically the 3 paving projects around Westport Harbor Rd (Main St to Westport Harbor Rd, Adamsville Rd to Westport Harbor

Rd, and Westport Harbor Rd to MA state line). These roads are in incredibly poor conditions, with extremely large potholes. They create for bad safety hazards. The roads are very narrow with little to no shoulder. Cars swerve around the potholes and get dangerously close to walkers and bikers, including children walking to and from the ballfield. The portions of these roads in Rhode Island are quite small because most of the roads surrounding these stretches are all in Massachusetts. Massachusetts paved them last year and they are all now in great condition. The problem is that cars fly down these roads really fast, particularly now that the roads in Mass are paved so well. When they hit the roads in Rhode Island, the cars hit the potholes and sometimes spin out. We live along Westport Harbor Rd and we have a 2-year old daughter, and the conditions of the roads promote an unsafe situation.

Can the timeline on these projects be pushed up? It appears they are presently planned to begin in 2028, which is too far out considering the unsafe conditions of the roads.

Thanks so much for your input! Again, this transparency is great!

**Response to I-2-1**

Thank you for your positive feedback regarding the mapping dashboard.

Regarding the 3 roadways segments around Westport Harbor Rd, these projects are programmed in the STIP's Pavement Program as part of STIP ID 1403, the RI-81 Crandall Road and East Road Resurfacing Project. The earliest year that funding is available is FFY 2028, which begins on October 1, 2027.

Should additional funding be made available, this project could potentially advance earlier. Your comments relative to the need for this project have been noted.

**I-3: Joseph DePasquale**

**City:** Warren

**Submit Date:** 06/27/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-3-1**

RISTIP; is important for many reasons. One reason is safety. Riding or walking on a safe bike and pedestrian path is a key component of the the functionality of the path. Enjoyment is also a key component to the overall experience, be it transportation for work or school, if it's not safe and enjoyable, it's not functional. Environmental impact, if we are to reduce emissions and congestion on the roads we must improve our bike and pedestrian paths. This is the straightforward approach that needs to be taken to secure the funding to improve our paths.

**Response to I-3-1**

Thank you for your comment. The 10-year spending program laid out in the STIP seeks to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety through investments in sidewalk and pavement

infrastructure. Walking and biking is a healthier and more environmentally friendly way of travel and is the focus of RIDOT's Active Transportation program. In addition, several projects in other programs (Bridge, Pavement, Traffic Safety, etc.) include components of active transportation.

#### **I-4: Jeffrey Smith**

**City:** Everett

**Submit Date:** 06/27/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

##### **Comment I-4-1**

I would like to see the following:

First I would like to see the State of Rhode Island look into merging the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority & Bridge & Turnpike Authority with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation, especially with any development of any proposed Rapid Rail & ferry Projects.

Second, the State of Rhode island must develop their own intrastate rapid rail line & not rely on the MBTA for their rail service. <https://www.providencejournal.com/news/20190421/mass-transit-advocates-urge-ri-to-develop-its-own-rapid-rail-system>

Third, Have the RIDOT-Sea Streak Providence-Bristol-Rocky Point-Providence Ferry operate year-round as a year round Narragansett Bay Commuter Ferry. Plus having the oldest ferry service operated by Rhode Island's oldest ferry company, Interstate Navigation, aka Block island Ferry, like the MBTA-Boston Harbor City Cruises Aqua Line Commuter Ferry. The ferry service could also connect Bristol & the Prudence Island & the Bay Islands with TF Green Airport. <http://rhodybeat.com/stories/ferrys-future-may-include-rocky-point-stop,22515>  
<https://www.mbta.com/schedules/ferry>

Fourth, Along with Massachusetts, look into have congesting tolling, while collecting tolls on truck traffic in Rhode Island.

##### **Response to I-4-1**

Thank you for your thoughts on Rhode Island's transportation future. The State of Rhode Island remains committed to expanding and improving its rail and waterborne transit network in conjunction with in-state and out-of-state partners and service providers.

The State applies federal Congestion Management Air Quality (CMAQ) funds to support projects and programs that aim to reduce congestion and single occupancy travel on roadways. We will continue to use those funds to explore alternative methods of travel and services.

In addition, the Study and Development Program is new to the FFY 2022 - 2031 STIP and provides for an opportunity to investigate, develop, or pilot various transportation proposals. The State Planning and Research projects (TIPIDs 11101 and 11102) directly funds further research and development for such efforts. The greater program contains separate projects that will investigate work that may become a new, future capital project in the STIP.

## **I-5: Faith LaBossiere**

**City:** Charlestown

**Submit Date:** 06/28/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

### **Comment I-5-1**

Unless I missed something innovative, the proposed budget does little address the climate change, advance green infrastructure and active transportation. This budget will continue to leave RI behind so much of the country in forward planning.

I've been a bike advocate for a number of years and I want RIDOT and Division of Planning to refocus their thinking. We've been asking for this for years, but it hasn't happened. People all over the country have changed their priorities to other modes of transportation with much success.

RI is very dependent on tourism. Businesses struggle to make it, and active transportation will help them. RI is missing an opportunity, but we need to endorse it. Charlestown has been talking about safety and how to traverse the Town on a bike and there are problems in connectivity. We have some ideas for connection. Need to move forward being a cycle friendly community. People south of Rt. 1 need to get to their facilities. We have options from VHB on how to address this. We need to think of the bigger picture and put bike/peds first.

### **Response to I-5-1**

Thank you for your comment. The 10-year spending program laid out in the STIP seeks to improve bicycle and pedestrian connectivity through investments in sidewalk and pavement infrastructure which can also generate economic development benefits. Walking and biking is the focus of the STIP's Active Transportation program and several projects in other programs (Bridge, Pavement, Traffic Safety, etc.) include components of active transportation. RIDOT seeks to add complete streets elements to every project as allowed and where possible and desirable. Limitations on adding new projects to the STIP are mainly fiscal, as other competing priorities must be served. However, improving active transportation around the state remains a priority for RIDOT. Your concerns regarding Route 1 have been noted.

## **I-6: K. Grant Satterley**

**City:** Portsmouth

**Submit Date:** 06/29/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

### **Comment I-6-1**

I support safer bicycle routes in RI particularly Aquidneck Island. If you are a cyclist in this area you know how dangerous it is for yourself never mind trying to teach your children the joys of cycling along with all the health benefit for yourself and the environment. Many times I cycle parallel with the old rail track and wish I could communicate like they do on the east bay bike path. Let's all step up and get this done for the good of our community.

**Response to I-6-1**

Thank you for your comment. The 10-year spending program laid out in the STIP seeks to improve bicycle safety and amenities on Aquidneck Island through investments in sidewalk and pavement infrastructure. Walking and biking is the focus of the STIP's Active Transportation program and several projects in other programs (Bridge, Pavement, Traffic Safety, etc.) include components to improve the alternative transportation experience.

With specific regard to Aquidneck Island, there are several projects in the STIP that seek to improve pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure on the island's primary roadways. Among these projects are a shared-use bicycle path from Burma Road to Old West Main Road (TIPID 5161), signage and safety improvements along the Mount Hope Bay bike path (TIPID 5162), a shared-use-path along West Main Road from Stringham Rd. to Mill Lane to improve rider safety (TIPID 1360), and the East Main Road Shared Use Paths (TIPIDs 9004 and 9005).

**I-7: Edward Soares**

**City:** North Providence

**Submit Date:** 06/30/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-7-1**

The State of Rhode Island needs to leave Kennedy Plaza alone. Kennedy Plaza was made for people from all walks of life to be able to use RIPTA buses easily. If Kennedy Plaza's hub is destroyed and replaced with mini-hubs, people will have to catch extra buses in order to make their connections. Everyone suffers. It will be especially hard to get around if you are a person who is a senior citizen or who has disabilities. I have a mobility disability that makes it hard to walk without a walker. For me, it would be more difficult to get from North Providence to Newport and Narragansett. Riding those buses is important for me because I love RIPTA buses. I know how to get along very well on a RIPTA bus. I never get lost on a RIPTA bus. I'm even on the ATEC committee. Hopefully you will see this from the senior and disability point of view.

**Response to I-7-1**

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More information can be found here: [https://www.dot.ri.gov/about/who/docs/Multi-Hub\\_Press\\_Update\\_11-20.pdf](https://www.dot.ri.gov/about/who/docs/Multi-Hub_Press_Update_11-20.pdf).

## **I-8: Portsmouth,**

**City:** Portsmouth

**Submit Date:** 06/29/2021

**Submit Method:** Oral

### **Comment I-8-1**

In reference to STIP ID 1379 Road Service and repaving on 138 and STIP ID 1380. This has been a disaster for last 30 years, multiple hazards and accidents. Promised that it would be repaved many times, it's highest amount of complaints on their Town Council. It's scheduled for resurfacing in 2022, it's now design 2022 and they want it to be moved up ASAP.

Sprague St STIP ID 1377 has been combined with a paving project. Time frame for that project was 2017/18 for sidewalks and 2022/23 for resurfacing. With the combination, it will be done 2030/31. Main thoroughfare, ped safety, walking path to high school. All other areas are ADA compliant except this one. Request that all parts of that project be moved up to next year.

STIP ID 1360, paving project, remind board that another portion was paved a couple years ago. STIP ID 1380 and other projects within the STIP were done at different times that could be combined.

Safety upgrades at Quarry Lane, STIP ID 5377, addition of wheelchair/sidewalks/etc for 2022/23, could this be done with 1380 in one shot. East Main Rd bike paths, one is up for a grant and one is under concept. We would like this completed in a way that won't hinder traffic flow.

### **Response to I-8-1**

Thank you for your concern about these projects.

There are three resurfacing projects along East Main Road in Middletown and Portsmouth. These projects are programmed in the FY22-31 STIP to be constructed in sequence with one another. TIPID 1380 is scheduled to commence construction first in 2023, but this timeline may be accelerated. New funding could be made available from the American Rescue Plan under RIDOT's proposed "Smooth Rhodes" program, pending state approval.

In regards to the McCorrie Lane signal improvements and TIPID 1380, RIDOT is aware of the opportunity to bundle this safety improvement with roadway resurfacing, and will monitor the status and scope of the project to determine compatibility. The same applies to TIPID 9004, the first phase of the East Main Road Shared Use Path.



The timeline for TIPID 1377 (Sprague Street) may be adjusted, and RIDOT will work with local stakeholders to make adjustments to the project as needed.

We appreciate you bringing the recent resurfacing of a section of West Main Road to our attention. The limits of roadway resurfacing for TIPID 1360 will be reduced back to Locust Avenue from Mill Lane.

**I-9: Narragansett,**

**City:** Narragansett

**Submit Date:** 06/28/2021

**Submit Method:** Oral

**Comment I-9-1**

COMMENTARY ON THE DRAFT FFY2022-2031 STATE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

TOWN OF NARRAGANSETT

Michael Deluca - Community Development Director June 29, 2021

The Town of Narragansett currently has 6 items shown on the 2022-2031 STIP. Staff has reviewed these projects and offer the following comments:

1. RIDOT Bridge program - TIP ID 3027 - Bridge Group 18A- The Route 1 On - ramp bridge
  - a. Bridge #482 - major rehabilitation. TOWN SUPPORTS THIS PROJECT AS DRAFTED
  
2. RIDOT Pavement Program - TIP ID 1362 - RT 1A
  - a. Repaving of Boston Neck Road from Sprague Bridge to Bridgetown Road. TOWN SUPPORTS THIS PROJECT AS DRAFTED
  
3. STIP Active Transportation program - TIP ID 1361- South Pier Road
  - a. Resurfacing of Roadway sidewalk replacement and handicapped ramp installation. Sidewalk on northern shoulder will be replaced in conjunction with improvement to drainage system along the route.
    - i. TOWN HAS DEEP CONCERNS ABOUT THE PROPOSED 4 YEAR WAIT FOR INITIATION OF THIS PROJECT. THIS ROAD HAS BEEN THE TOWNS #1 PRIORITY FOR THE PAST TWO TIP SUBMITTALS. ADDITIONALLY, TOWN HAS REPEATEDLY EMPHASIZED THAT THE ROAD WILL NEED "REPLACEMENT" NOT JUST RESURFACING. THIS FACT WAS BORNE OUT DURING THE 2011 REPLACEMENT TOWN CONDUCTED ON THE EASTERN 1,100 LINEAR FEET OF THE ROAD IN WHICH IT WAS NOTED THAT THE ROADWAY POSSESSED NO SUBBASE AT ALL.
    - ii. TOWN ASKS THAT THIS PROJECT BE ADVANCED TO 2024 FOR DESIGN AND 2025 FOR CONSTRUCTION.

4. RIDOT Traffic Safety Program -TIP ID 5375 -Crosswalk improvements
  - a. Crosswalks, wheelchair ramps, pedestrian crossing devices, left turn lanes and other intersection improvements.
    - i. TOWN SUPPORTS THIS PROJECT AS DRAFTED, AND IS WILLING TO PROVIDE A FULL LISTING OF LOCATIONS FOR WHICH THESE IMPROVEMENTS ARE NECESSARY.
    - ii. PARTIAL LIST OF CANDIDATE SITES:
      1. Memorial Boulevard sidewalks at Post Office
      2. Kingstown Road at several sidestreet intersections
      3. Beach Street- Ocean Road Intersection
5. STIP Program Active Transportation Program - TIP ID 5093 Ocean Road Beautification Program - Phase 1 & 2.
  - a. Sidewalks and pedestrian improvements on Ocean Road from Beach Street to South Pier Road
    - i. TOWN SUPPORTS THIS PROJECT AS DRAFTED.
6. STIP Program -Active Transportation Program - TIP ID 5089
  - a. William C. O'Neill Bike Path Extension - Phase 4B - Design/ Construct the final segment to Narragansett Town Beach.
    - i. TOWN SUPPORTS THIS PROJECT AS DRAFTED WITH UNDERSTANDING THAT THE \$3M ALLOTTED TO CONSTRUCTION WILL BE AVAILABLE WHEN AN ACCEPTABLE ALIGNMENT IS IDENTIFIED.
    - ii. TOWN ASKS THAT THE RIDOT CONSIDER ALLOTING UP TO \$100K TO THE TOWN TO UNDERTAKE A STUDY OF ALL ROADWAYS AND OTHER PUBLIC PROPERTIES IN THE PIER AREA IN ORDER TO ASSESS VIABILITY OF ALTERNATIVES NOT PREVIOUSLY STUDIED.
7. Other projects - Town requests status report on progress of projects listed in the current TIP not noted here.
  - a. Bridgetown Road resurfacing - Town requests RIDOT add sidewalks.
  - b. Bridgetown Bridge
  - c. Gov. Sprague Bridge

**Response to I-9-1**

Thank you for your support on STIPIDs 3027 -Bridge Group 18A, 1362 - RI-1A Boston Neck Rd (Sprague Bridge to Bridgetown Road), 5093 - Ocean Road Beautification, and 5375 - Intersection & Crosswalk Improvements.

Your work-area suggestions for the latter project will be evaluated with RIDOT's Traffic Safety Team or may be presented to the State Traffic Commission. We appreciate the Town bringing these intersections to our attention.

For STIPID 1361, South Pier Road, the description of the project will be updated to reflect the roadway as a reconstruction. RIDOT has enthusiastically supported the efforts by U.S. Rep. Jim Langevin to secure Member-Designated Projects (MDP) to advance construction of South Pier Road as part of the federal highway bill making its way through Congress. RIDOT sees the infrastructure investments being discussed on the federal level as a window of opportunity to accelerate this project.

RIDOT and the Division of Statewide Planning will discuss with the Town the feasibility of allotting \$100,000 from the project's budget to study alternative routes for Phase 4B of the William C. O'Neill bike path extension to Narragansett Town Beach.

### **I-10: David Hamel**

**City:** Wakefield

**Submit Date:** 06/29/2021

**Submit Method:** Oral

#### **Comment I-10-1**

I'm a South Kingstown resident - BPAC member - master plan has several projects to mention. \$2 million to bike/ped issues. Complete streets was made into state law in 2012. Direction to integrate that into road building and other transportation projects as it helps communities. Old Tower Hill Road project plan was to repave, but now it has complete street elements and traffic has slowed down. Need to make more progress toward non-auto travel. Does not see a problem reallocating road space for other users. 5% good, 10% better (ref?).

#### **Response to I-10-1**

Thank you for your comment. The 10-year spending program laid out in the STIP seeks to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety through investments in sidewalk and pavement infrastructure. Walking and biking is the focus of RIDOT's Active Transportation program. In addition, several projects in other programs (Bridge, Pavement, Traffic Safety, etc.) include components of alternative transportation. Similar to Old Tower Hill Road, RIDOT seeks to add complete streets elements to every project as allowed and where possible and desirable.

### **I-11: Rosemary Smith**

**City:** Narragansett

**Submit Date:** 06/29/2021

**Submit Method:** Oral

#### **Comment I-11-1**

My name is Rosemary Smith, and I am a resident of Narragansett. I am a supporter of the William C. O'Neill South County Bike Path, a member of Paths to Progress (which is a statewide bikeway advocacy group) and a contributing member of the RI Bicycle Mobility Plan Advisory Committee.

I have three questions to consider tonight. Where did the money go? We gathered in this room four years ago to advocate for increased state/federal funding for active transportation including bikeways. Since that time, the Green Economy Bond administered by the RI DEM funded the design and construction of William C. O'Neill/ South County Bike Path's next link, Phase 4A, which has just been completed with an ending point at the Narragansett Community Center. The final Phase 4B between the Community Center and the Town Beach is in discussion between the Town of Narragansett and RI DOT. However, the project in the TIP has been diminished from \$8 million to \$3 million. Where did the money go?

What is the future of Active Transportation in Rhode Island?

The current draft of the State Transportation Improvement Program allocates \$52M for the category of Active Transportation projects over the 4-year period Federal Fiscal Year 2022-2025. This represents only 1.8 per cent of the total transportation budget. Although RIDOT characterizes this as a substantial increase in funding, it is less than what was forecast for this same period in the current STIP (\$59.95M) and it fails to implement the recommendation from the recently enacted RI State Bicycle Mobility Plan to increase the funding allocated to Active Transportation. 5% would be an increase that would be helpful to Active Transportation and match our neighboring state of Connecticut. This proposed budget is a step behind where our active transportation community is and a step behind where are neighboring states are. What is our future?

What would be the result of increase funding for Active Transportation both within the 10- year frame and the 4-year constrained funding period?

We could use the additional funding for those roadways which are candidate bikeways in the RI Bicycle Mobility Plan . We could work on connecting our bikeways from state borders to the Narragansett Bay. If the roadways are on the STIP in the out years, RI DOT could provide additional funding to the towns for striping and other accommodations for bikeways as a temporary solution.

We could Increase funding so that there could be additional staff positions in RI DOT to promote bikeways. This staffing would ensure that bicycle/pedestrian treatment is included in design and construction of roadways and bridges at the beginning of the process. There is a need to monitor counts of bicycle and pedestrian use of multi-use paths. Data needs to be collected and reported so that further funding can be secured.

I am trying to remain hopeful for the progress of Active Transportation in Rhode Island. I do see the increased number of projects that are in the State Budget, but they are small in comparison to the needs of Active Transportation. I am also appreciative of the restriping of Boston Neck Road by the Town Beach in the last week. Statewide Planning and RI Department of Transportation needs to shift its priorities to the safe passage of people over the fast passage of cars.

Thank you for your consideration.

**Response to I-11-1**

With regard to TIPID 5089, the William C O'Neill Bike Path Extension (South County Bike Path), the project was initially listed at \$8.43 million in the FFY18-27 STIP prior to Amendment 19. After meeting with the town of Narragansett's planner, RIDOT performed a readiness review in advance of the Town moving forward with the project. Six alternatives were considered for this project, with the readiness study undertaken to determine which of the six would be the least environmentally damaging and most practical. The studies showed that the \$8.43 million version would be difficult, if not impossible to obtain permits for given environmental considerations. The alternative route was estimated at \$3 million and carried forward with Amendment 19 to the STIP. This alternative will remain in the new FFY22-31.

We appreciate and have noted your suggestions. RIDOT will be replacing the position of Bicycle Projects coordinator and this position will be responsible for coordinating active transportation projects, including bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

**I-12: David Smith**

**City:** Narragansett

**Submit Date:** 06/29/2021

**Submit Method:** Oral

**Comment I-12-1**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed State Transportation Improvement Program.

My name is David Smith. My wife Rosemary and I are active in the Friends of the William C. O'Neill Bike Path and the state-wide **bicycle** advocacy group Paths to Progress, and we served on the Rhode Island Statewide Bicycle Mobility Plan Advisory Committee. The Bicycle Mobility Plan, adopted by the state in December 2020, presents a bold but doable plan for creating and interconnecting bikeways for transportation and recreation, including multiuse paths for users of all ages and abilities. I want to focus my remarks on the implementation of the Bicycle Mobility Plan.

But first I want to say that I am pleased that funding remains in the STIP for completion of the William C. O'Neill (South County) Bike Path, albeit at \$3.00 million to which it was reduced in the previous plan. I'm ever hopeful that funding can be secured in the next year or so to design and permit an off-road route through Canonchet Farm. Absent that, I urge the Department of Transportation and the Town of Narragansett to develop a better alternative route than the one rejected by the town in 2019.

For the FFY2022-2031 State Transportation Improvement Program, I am recommending that the state double the amount of funding for active transportation and that the mix of projects for this addition have a greater share of bikeway projects compared sidewalks and crossings.

I applaud the integration of pedestrian and bicycle treatments into the design of road projects, an approach recommended in the BMP, in addition to being good practice. Old Tower Hill Road in Wakefield is an excellent example. It's appropriate for road projects scheduled in the period of constrained funding.

But so much more can be done by applying bicycle treatments such as striping and on-pavement signage to candidate bikeways along roadways that won't be resurfaced until the out years. Don't tell me that new road markings are not applied years ahead of resurfacing. Witness the implementation center turn lanes on Post Road Route 1 in North Kingstown and more recently on the South County Trail Route 2 in South Kingstown.

Here's an example: The half-mile of Boston Neck Road in front of Narragansett Beach is now being restriped as part of a public safety project with bicycle markings applied in the last couple of days, a project that was recommended by the Narragansett Bicycle-Pedestrian Advisory Committee in June 2018. Now continue with on-pavement bicycle markings on Boston Neck Road all the way to Wickford. And where there are no sidewalks add facing pedestrian markings. This heavily travelled bike route is ten miles of the BMP's top priority candidate bikeway in South County. Do so rather than waiting scheduled repaving of sections of the road after 2026 and ignoring segments that are not in the ten year STIP. Improve bicycle safety now, along the entire stretch, provide continuity of experience and learn from a low-cost experiment about what works and what works really well.

If the Department of Transportation does not have the bandwidth to deal with a host of new projects, allocate the necessary funds to the cities and towns to help accelerate the implementation of the Rhode Island Statewide Bicycle Mobility Plan. Thank you.

**Response to I-12-1**

Thank you for your comments regarding the FFY22-31 STIP.

Prior to Amendment 19, the William C. O'Neill Bike Path extension was listed in the STIP at \$8.43M. After meeting with the Town Planner of Narragansett, RIDOT performed a readiness review in advance of the Town moving forward with the project under a Sub-Recipient Agreement with the Department. There were six alternatives that were considered. The readiness study was undertaken to narrow down the least environmentally damaging, most practical alternative. The alternative that the town prefers would be difficult, if not impossible, to get permitted. This alternative was estimated at \$3 million. This funding amount was what was carried forward in Amendment 19 of the previous STIP. RIDOT and RIDSP will continue to collaborate with the Town of Narragansett to determine a viable alternative.

Please note that bicycle and pedestrian improvements are not limited to the Active Transportation Program. Many projects in other programs (Pavement, Bridge, Corridor, Major Capital, etc) incorporate active elements into their design. For example, consider the new shared-use path along the Henderson ("Red") Bridge under TIPID 3061 (Bridge Group 49). The

RIDOT Traffic Safety program provides for \$87.9M in funding over ten years for investments in intersections and crosswalks to bolster safety for all road users.

Roadway striping may be done in coordination with the resurfacing of state roads. However, striping is primarily considered a traffic safety activity (hence its inclusion in the Traffic Safety Capital Program). Work zones are identified and separated based on their region with prioritization done based on traffic safety needs. For example, TIPID 5430 provides for the striping of state roads within the East Bay in the 2021 to 2022 period. TIPID 5440 addresses other work locations within the East Bay region for the 2023-2024 period. Other regions may have different striping intervals/schedules. For example, TIPID 5437 addresses striping in the southern region in a 2022-2023 interval.

### **I-13: James Vogel**

**City:** South Kingstown

**Submit Date:** 06/29/2021

**Submit Method:** Oral

#### **Comment I-13-1**

Resident of South Kingstown - BPAC member - building off of comments from David Smith/Faith and how to link this together. Bike Plan in South Kingstown is a great plan to reference in putting together the STIP. Complete streets and bike/ped access are important, but bringing commerce is a vital element. How do we get across Rt. 1? It is currently unsafe. How to link Wakefield, beaches, and URI? Support previous comments, here to help if the board needs suggestions.

#### **Response to I-13-1**

Thank you for your comments. The Bicycle Mobility Plan is an important document that informs project development for several state and local agencies. Walking and biking is a healthier and more environmentally friendly way of travel and is the focus of RIDOT's Active Transportation program and throughout the STIP. RIDOT has met with representatives from both Charlestown and South Kingstown to discuss a safe way to travel cross Route 1. Such linkages would be subject to an open, competitive application process at the discretion of Statewide Planning, based on the priorities of the towns.

### **I-14: Various individuals and organizations**

**Submit Date:** 06/30/2021

**Submit Method:** Email

#### **Comment I-14-1**

Commentors: Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council (WRWC), Mary Bandura, Kathleen Gannon, Bruce Masterson, Brendan Rose, James King, Paul Marshall, Tom O'Neill, Eric Weiss, Peter Trafton, Rachel Harris, Phoebe Hall, Lily Whelan, Sandra Dowling, Lesley Warhurst,

Leland Grigoli, Andrew Neville, Sarah Thomas, Christian Parobek, David Mann, Lizabeth Bourret, Tricia Harris, Faith Labossiere, Susan Marcus, Sam Coren, Christine Sullivan, Jessica D'Avanza, David Krolick, Sue AnderBois, Maryellen Atkins, William Perry, Heather Riney, Ruben Rodriguez, Amber Ma, Steven Kahan, Dexter Hoag, Travis Garrahan, Kate Kelley, Jon Stenning, Eric Archer, Peter Dowling, Elizabeth Egan, et al.

We are living in an era of deep inequities, a worsening climate crisis, too many traffic fatalities, and an aging population of Rhode Islanders. We must pursue a robust, affordable, sustainable and equitable transportation system that will ensure we are building not just responsively, but proactively addressing these issues and many more. Regardless of age, ability, income, or background, the streets of Rhode Island should accommodate everyone safely and comfortably as they go from A to B, whether you travel by motor vehicle or by walking, biking, skateboard, wheelchair or any other active means.

For these reasons, we urge the STIP process to:

- Be more open, transparent, and democratic, to hold more than just one public hearing in two communities, and do real public outreach to raise awareness of these serious funding decisions.
- Account for the accelerating climate and traffic safety crises by doubling the proposed funding for active transportation both within the 10-year frame and the 4-year constrained funding period.
- Address the continued legacy of racism in transportation by prioritizing more funding to the Special Population Group Tracts as outlined in RIDOT's Transportation Equity Benefit Analysis.
- Use additional funding to implement the Bicycle Mobility Plan (BMP) for those roadways which are candidate bikeways in the BMP. Statewide active transportation partners worked very hard and interviewed a great number of people and communities in the development of the BMP. This is the time to commit to a statewide concerted effort to implement this thoughtful, well-researched plan.
- Provide funding to the towns for striping and other accommodations for bicycles on roadways in the outyears of the STIP.
- Create an "ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION" office at RIDOT coordinate active transportation and alignment with the BMP when considering design and construction of all transportation projects including roads and bridges throughout RI.
- Increase funding to staff positions in RIDOT to deal with bikeways and ensure that bicycle/pedestrian treatment is included in design and construction of roadways and bridges.



- Collect and monitor counts of bicycle and pedestrian use of multi-use paths.
- Develop, implement and publicize a service evaluation framework for evaluating bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure that includes feedback from actual users.

#### **Response to I-14-1**

1) Meetings of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) and State Planning Council (SPC) are held on a monthly basis and public comments can be offered at each and every meeting. The SPC, TAC, and the Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning (RIDSP) staff actively seek public input in the transportation planning process, particularly related to the Long Range Transportation Plan, State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), Performance Based Planning and Programming, and Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Public comments are received on a rolling basis throughout the year and used by committee members to improve the transportation planning process for the State of Rhode Island.

The FFY 2022-2031 STIP public review process follows and even goes beyond process outlined in the MPO's Public Participation Plan (PPP). The PPP reinforces the SPC and RIDSP's commitment to transparent communications and engagement with the public regardless of race, color, national origin, age, income, or ability, and with public and private agencies to support the statewide transportation planning process. The Plan outlines the responsibilities, goals, and strategies for engaging the public in its planning work and can be found online at <http://www.planning.ri.gov/public-participation/index.php>.

STIP program funding amounts were first presented to the TAC in April and the SPC in May. The Draft FFY 2022-2031 STIP was presented to the TAC and the SPC in June. Public notification on the draft FFY 2022-2031 STIP was provided on June 10. The public had 32 days to review and comment on the draft STIP. In addition two public hearings, in different areas of the State, were held to accept public comments on the draft STIP.

2) The FFY 2022-2031 STIP is fiscally constrained. If additional funding becomes available, there could be opportunities to increase funding for climate resilience and addressing traffic safety -- both programs are a high priority in the STIP. Currently, programming for traffic safety exceeds the federally required minimum level and additional funding is continuously being sought. Due to the importance of climate resiliency in transportation planning and programming, projects are identified that are susceptible to sea-level rise and additional project costs are calculated accordingly.

3) The FFY 2022-2031 STIP currently allocates over 50% of capital investments to tracts designated as a Minority and over 50% of capital investments to tracts designated as Low-Income. Due to the geographic location of project investments and the location of mapped Special Population Group (SPG) Tracts, transportation investments are finding their way to SPG tracts. Furthermore, the total percentage of all STIP asset costs allocated to Environmental Justice (EJ) SPG Tracts within the four fiscally constrained is 49.3% exceeding the percentage of designated EJ SPG tracts throughout RI (30.3%). In addition, percentages of SPG tracts intersecting RIPTA routes range from the high eighties to the high nineties for each group. Eighty-seven percent of aging SPG tracts intersect with RIPTA bus routes, while 99% of minority,

poverty/low-income, and a combination of both population tracts (EJ tracts) intersect with RIPTA bus routes.

4) If additional funding becomes available, there could be opportunities to increase funding for candidate bikeways shown in the BMP. Please note that every project must follow a study and development process to ascertain the proper roadway treatment and conduct necessary study and design. Study and design takes time and but can be accelerated by municipal involvement.

5) The FFY 2022-2031 STIP is fiscally constrained. If additional funding becomes available, there could be opportunities to provide funding to municipalities via a sub-recipient agreement. Please note that every project must follow a study and development process to ascertain the proper roadway treatment and conduct necessary study and design. Study and design takes time and but can be accelerated by municipal involvement.

6) Active Transportation projects are managed out of RIDOT's Planning Division. RIDOT will be replacing the position of Bicycle Projects coordinator and this position will be responsible for coordinating active transportation projects.

7) RIDOT's Project Management Department is in charge of assessing roadway design and bridge replacement. RIDOT has increased staffing in Project Management in recent years and has increased the total value of design and construction contracts to the highest levels in the Department's history. During project development, RIDOT holds meetings with municipal leaders and the public to determine the design of rehabilitation and reconstruction projects. Public feedback is important at these meetings.

8) Discussions are currently in progress between state agencies with a vested interest in bicycle facilities to determine how to best establish a bicycle and pedestrian countering program including the specific types of counters to be procured based the conditions in various locations. The need for bicycle and pedestrian data was outlined in the BMP and was reinforced by the experience during the pandemic whereby the demand for bicycle and pedestrian facilities increased dramatically.

9) The BMP was developed with feedback from bicycle users and the public. Candidate corridors in the BMP were developed based on an evaluation of existing infrastructure. Ongoing user data is also collected by RIDOT's Traffic Safety Division and used to develop roadway improvement projects like new striping and geometric enhancements. More information on the feedback used to develop the BMP can be found in the BMP document at <http://www.planning.ri.gov/documents/LRTP/Bicycle-Mobility-Plan.pdf>.

**I-15: Brian DeChambeau**

**City:** Providence

**Submit Date:** 06/30/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-15-1**

The STIP funds transit at what would appear to be higher levels than in the past, but it doesn't go far enough. High-capacity transit should be a priority within the denser parts of metro Providence, and it appears that north-south routes have indeed been prioritized. More funding should be provided for east-west routes between Olneyville, the West Side, East Providence, and Smith Hill. Transit should be provided at high levels of service that allow denser real estate development in the urban core.

Additionally, the 6/10 Connector and associated ramps should be replaced in a way that allows bicycle/pedestrian connections between Smith Hill and Federal Hill. Otherwise, funding should be provided for a pedestrian bridge connecting these two areas.

Funding should be allocated to mitigate congestion but NOT increase overall capacity. A reduction in VMT while maintaining residents' quality of life should be the driving force behind investments.

**Response to I-15-1**

Thank you for your comments.

The adopted Transit Master Plan (TMP) calls for East-West as well as North-South high capacity transit service. Fully funding implementation of the TMP will be an ongoing process, with additional revenue added incrementally as discretionary grants and dedicated funding streams are developed.

The 6/10 Reconstruction Project includes the construction of a shared-use path to link Providence pedestrians and cyclists to the Washington Secondary. In addition, several major projects in the STIP are designed to alleviate congestion on interstates and local roads alike.

Regarding transit, the State's preference is to first implement lower-cost demand management strategies that reduce travel and operational strategies that make more efficient use of roadway capacity. Consistent with Federal guidance, high-cost capacity increases that primarily serve single occupant vehicle are left as a last resort. To learn more please review the State's Congestion Management Process Plan available at <http://www.planning.ri.gov/planning-areas/transportation/congestion-management.php>. The plan also identifies additional strategies that the State should consider. Some of these are statewide strategies (e.g., travel demand management or pedestrian network planning), while others are focused on specific congested corridors.

**I-16: Barry Schiller**

**Submit Date:** 06/29/2021

**Submit Method:** Oral

**Comment I-16-1**

As the first 4 years of the STIP are the ones that really count because funding for its projects has to be identified, and while the out-years can include wish-list items with no commitment, I

mainly looked at the years 2022-2025. I think it fair to say the 4-year draft is a disappointing "business as usual."

You couldn't tell from this draft that there was a climate crisis, that an "Act on Climate" bill passed mandating emission reductions, that there was a recently approved Bicycle Mobility Plan (BMP) calling for doubling spending on bike and pedestrian infrastructure, and a Transit Master Plan (TMP) prioritizing increased service frequency. Serious money, beyond the highway repairs we all want, is for highway expansion, while funding for the bicycle and pedestrian program, now called Active Transportation, instead of doubling, is reduced a bit to \$52 million, only about 1.8% of RIDOT's budget. While the Draft STIP complicates analysis by including road resurfacing in some "Active Transportation" projects it also includes some sidewalk improvements in the Pavement Program. But I think it is evident that progress on the bike program will remain quite slow.

To take advantage of the potential for active transportation to better meet its potential to help us on public health, climate, land use and the economy, I think beyond more funding it needs a staffed Office of Active Transportation within RIDOT that engages with local government and community groups. I'd also suggest a pool of money in the TIP for competitive grants for biking or walking in local communities such as MA has. My town (North Providence) once asked for sidewalks on Smithfield Rd where there has been much development, and equipment designed to clear snow from sidewalks, but got no positive responses and seems to have given up on getting help for such projects. We need to do better, we need people in RIDOT who not just check off a box, but care about active transportation and have the resources to help promote it.

The Draft 4-year STIP will keep our commuter rail and bus systems going, but the only real expansion is finishing the Pawtucket-Central Falls commuter rail station. There does not seem to be any additional funding for the buses needed to increase service as called for in the TMP. It also seems there is little or no additional funding for electrification of vehicles or the commuter rail.

Worse, STIP project #5204 giving RIDOT authority to "reconfigure" the Kennedy Plaza bus hub - meaning to break up and disperse the hub, will clearly make the bus system more confusing and less convenient. RIDOT has no experience with designing or operating a bus hub, and their plan has been opposed by riders, planners, the Environment Council of RI, community groups, civil rights activists, and the Providence City Council! As the riders being disadvantaged are disproportionately poor and people of color, the RIDOT plan has drawn a Title VI civil rights complaint. So much for equity! It also squanders the millions of the transit bond that are needed to make improvements at bus hubs throughout the state - in Kennedy Plaza, at the Airport and train stations, including the new train-bus station in Pawtucket where the design does not seem to include indoor waiting or restrooms (which bus passengers have had in downtown Pawtucket), or even a canopy over the walkway between the train station and bus stop.

I note this is actually the state's first official opportunity for public input on RIDOT's anti-transit multi-hub plan. It should be removed from the STIP and the transit bond money reassigned to RIPTA to manage and use to "fund enhancements and renovations to mass transit hub infrastructure throughout the state" as voters were promised by the bond. Unlike RIDOT, RIPTA at least routinely provides for public input in their planning.

There are some expensive highway capacity expansion projects in the Plan: \$205 million more for widening I-95 northbound on the Providence Viaduct right in the center of the historic city which has already given over so much land for highway interchanges, \$78 million for I-295-Route 37 ramps and a widening of I-295 in the "Cranston Canyon," \$78 million for Route 146 including an overpass at the Sayles Hill Rd, and \$111 million for two projects on I-195 including new ramps and a short additional lane. I think all this will encourage more driving and over longer distances despite a stated goal of reducing vehicle-miles traveled. Experience has often been that increasing road capacity to relieve congestion can result in more widespread congestion from the induced additional driving.

With commute patterns likely changing to less of a rush-hour peak, to make room for more active transportation or transit funding, I suggest the \$78 million STIP project #3300 to widen a part of I-295 and reconfigure some ramps with Route 37 be deferred to 2026 or beyond. By coincidence I just drove on that stretch and see no urgent problem. I doubt motorists are clamoring for this project. I don't recall the City of Cranston asking for it either when I was on the TAC. Similarly, other dubious priorities that might be deferred are expanding Route 146 capacity (#3250) and I-195 ramps (#3082.)

Bottom line for me is there is nothing transformational in this Draft despite our crises in climate, social justice, urban decline, sprawl. I encourage planners working on the next revision to better address these crises.

That said I want to acknowledge its not all bad! RIDOT seems genuinely trying to improve our bridges and fix the pavement, to deal with stormwater, finish the Pawtucket-Central Falls commuter rail station, continue to gradually extend the bike paths, they brought back the Providence-Newport Ferry, and they have a strong safety program. I also appreciate RIDOT for successfully designing and implementing the tolls on the heavy trucks that do much of the damage to help pay for its repairs, and Governor Raimondo for using her political capital to get those tolls approved.

Thank you for considering this testimony.

#### **Response to I-16-1**

Thank you for your feedback.

Efforts for ongoing improvements for active transportation, transit, and a more complete and multi-modal approach at transportation remain at the forefront of project consideration moving forward. As evidenced in multiple parts of our LRTP, the BMP, TMP, and CMP all put an

emphasis on a multi-modal system for improvement. These plans are a large part of our E-STIP mapping tool, which measure projects based on their potential impacts on several factors that are referenced in these plans. As more projects are analyzed with this approach, we anticipate that Rhode Island will become a more user-friendly and equitable State as it pertains to movement.

In regard to bus and rail, RI continues to work with MBTA and Amtrak to consider new approaches at improving these modes of transportation. These options remain a vital part of improving our system, alleviating congestion, and creating a better and comprehensive network for all residents looking for ways to move that are not car-centric. Bus electrification is under heavy consideration from RIPTA, and pilots have already been put into circulation. Long-term cost benefits, advancements in technology, and additional funding assistance will help to make bus electrification a reality in the future.

As it relates to Kennedy Plaza, efforts here are still very preliminary. We recognize the importance of the bus hub as a central point for those who utilize the RIPTA system and how vital it is to creating an equitable mode of transportation for the thousands of people who need it to get to work, home, school, or to visit downtown. As we continue to advance in talks surrounding Kennedy Plaza, we want to continue to hear from the public to keep the system intact and continue to provide the level of service expected from RIPTA riders.

In Rhode Island's Congestion Management Plan, highway/roadway expansion is seen as a last resort to combat congestion. While some of the projects that are referenced have been underway for some time, please rest assured that with new access to data and alternative approaches at mitigation roadway congestion, that future expansion projects will be under a high level of scrutiny moving forward as we continue to utilize a data-driven planning approach at improving the system.

### **I-17: Kathleen Gannon**

**City:** Providence

**Submit Date:** 06/30/2021

**Submit Method:** Oral

#### **Comment I-17-1**

I am the board chair for RI Bike Coalition. Budget is a statement of values. Where is the money being spent? Active transportation is not being valued as it accounts for 1.8% of the funding. With so many factors at stake, RI needs a modern multi-modal transportation system which we can't get to with 1.8% of the funding. Should be investing much more. Urge to double current funding for active transportation within the four and ten year STIP, prioritize more funding for equity, implement identified candidate bikeways from the BMP, add funding to municipalities, hire an active transportation employee to support these efforts, treat active transportation as a legitimate part of the transportation system, develop and utilize feedback from active users to best understand how to better the system. Disappointed by lack of attendance for TAC, time of meeting, and turnout.

**Response to I-17-1**

Thank you for your comment. The 10-year spending program laid out in the STIP seeks to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety through investments in sidewalk and pavement infrastructure. Walking and biking is the focus of RIDOT's Active Transportation program. In addition, several projects in other programs (Bridge, Pavement, Traffic Safety, etc.) include components of alternative transportation. Responses to other comments herein are provided under Comment I-14-1.

**I-18: Bob Anderson**

**Submit Date:** 06/30/2021

**Submit Method:** Oral

**Comment I-18-1**

Concerned with bridge group listings (Church Street Bridge). Did not see bridge project which is in need of repairs.

Sneetch Pond Road (1319), this road proposed for reclamation, needs drainage repairs. Culvert repair should be included in the scope of work.

**Response to I-18-1**

Thank you for your comments on the FFY 2022-2031 STIP.

In the case of Bridge #943, the Church Street Railroad Bridge, that structure may also be repaired under a bridge preservation (TIPID 7203) or immediate needs contract (TIPID 6999).

Thank you for the suggestion regarding Sneech Pond Road (TIPID 1319). RIDOT is currently reviewing and inspecting the culverts and drainage structures you referenced along the roadway so that they may be bundled with the roadway reclamation and rehabilitation work in construction.

In the event that additional federal funding may be received, there may be consideration for the acceleration or addition of various projects to the STIP.

**I-19: Terri Courtvriend**

**City:** Portsmouth

**Submit Date:** 06/30/2021

**Submit Method:** Oral

**Comment I-19-1**

District 72 State Representative. Feels responsible for projects that delayed in her district of Portsmouth/Middletown. Opposed to postponement of STIP ID 1380 and ID 1379. Applaud more bike friendly projects. Communication to the public on how/why projects are delayed are very helpful for elected officials as they are reached out to for advice. Not sure how to influence

the programming process or prevent projects from getting delayed. Would like projects in her district to continue moving ahead as scheduled.

**Response to I-19-1**

Thank you, Representative Courtvriend, for your comment.

RIDOT and the Division of Statewide Planning understand the need for a resurfacing of Route 138 East Main Road in Portsmouth. This roadway is on RIDOT's Smooth Rhodes project list and may be accelerated if the General Assembly so chooses.

We have identified TIPID 1380, the resurfacing of RI-138 East Main Road from Hedley Street to the Middletown Town Line, as containing sections of the roadway that are in the most urgent need of repair. RIDOT has scheduled the project to begin at the start of the FY22-31 STIP window in fiscal year 2022 (which begins October 1st, 2021). TIPID 1379, which includes resurfacing, pedestrian, and safety improvements along East Main Road from Hedley Street to Turnpike Avenue, will follow.

Adjustments to the timeline of a project can occur for a variety of reasons, among them a need for better coordination with adjacent efforts or additional considerations for permitting and readiness. All projects must undertake a study and development process before they are executed.

**I-20: Liza Burkin**

**Submit Date:** 06/30/2021

**Submit Method:** Oral

**Comment I-20-1**

With Providence Streets Coalition. Thinks climate change concerns should be addressed better in the STIP because transportation is the largest emitting sector of carbon. What is happening in Portland, OR could happen in Rhode Island. Induced demand is an issue and adding highways (expanding them) does not improve traffic conditions. This STIP does not acknowledge the state's new climate law. All agencies sit on the EC4 therefore all projects in the STIP need to address GHG emissions (how much impact it could have). The Act on Climate law mandates projects show how they contribute to statewide gas emissions, which is required. There is no need for highway expansion at all. Also, there are no supporters of Kennedy Plaza project. Stop making plans that don't conform to present day issues.

**Response to I-20-1**

We agree that climate change is a vital part of making transportation investment decisions and can be the driver of many projects that make up a comprehensive plan to address the emissions that are attributable to the transportation sector. Under the 2021 Act on Climate, the state will develop a plan to incrementally reduce climate emissions to net-zero by 2050. The plan will be



updated every 5 years and will address areas such as environmental injustices, public health inequities and a fair employment transition as fossil-fuel jobs are replaced by green energy jobs. This is a nascent law that may drive change in the STIP analysis. Your feedback is helpful.

As it relates to Kennedy Plaza, efforts here are still developing. As we continue to advance the project, we want to continue to hear from the public to keep the process focused on users and so we continue to provide the level of service expected from RIPTA riders. We believe a better future will include modern transit infrastructure and operations that become a more preferred way to travel to and from Providence. Your feedback on this project is taken into account.

**I-21: Alicia Lehrer**

**Submit Date:** 06/30/2021

**Submit Method:** Oral

**Comment I-21-1**

STIP ID 5178 - In the plan, looks like funds being moved from 22/23 to 23/24. We will be ready to construct in 22/23 and will need the funds then, so move the funds back. There are wonderful projects in the BMP that are prioritized, therefore I request a position at RIDOT be devoted to implementing this plan and other alternative transportation plans.

**Response to I-21-1**

Thank you for your comment regarding TIPID 5178, the Woonasquatucket River Greenway improvements. We have noted this concern. Discussions are ongoing between RIDOT and the City of Providence regarding the shift in funding.

The Bicycle Mobility Plan is an important document that informs project development for several state and local agencies. Walking and biking is a healthier and more environmentally friendly way of travel and is the focus of RIDOT's Active Transportation program. In addition, several projects in other programs (Bridge, Pavement, Traffic Safety, etc.) include components of active transportation.

**I-22: Monica Gonzalez**

**City:** Portsmouth

**Submit Date:** 07/01/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-22-1**

I just learned that the improvements to East Main Road (RI-138), the main thoroughfare I use on my daily commute is being pushed back to 2023. This is unacceptable. The road has potholes and is uneven. I'd like to see that plan continue for 2022.

Additionally, though I don't use the other Portsmouth roads as much, I cannot believe that West Main Road (RI-114) is being pushed out to 4 years! That's the most heavily trafficked road on the entire island where thousands of people come in to work and to vacation in Newport.

Why are you pushing back the dates for our town? You can't keep pushing our roads and town center development out further and further, we need the changes!

**Response to I-22-1**

Thank you for your comments on these roadways.

Improvements to East Main Road are being addressed under three different projects to resurface the road in both Portsmouth and Middletown. The section of East Main Road between Hedley Street and the Middletown Town Line, represented by TIPID 1380, has been identified as in the most urgent need of repair among the three projects. It is being designed in Fiscal Year 2022 (which begins October 1st, 2021). This timeline may be accelerated if new funding is made available from the American Rescue Plan under RIDOT's proposed "Smooth Rhodes" program.

The remaining two sections, East Main Road from Hedley Street to Turnpike Ave (TIPID 1379) and East Main Road from the Portsmouth Town Line to Aquidneck Ave in Middletown will follow this project. These projects are scheduled in this manner to provide for sufficient time to design and to phase construction to minimize traffic conflicts.

There are two projects along West Main Road in Portsmouth and Middletown. TIPID 1376 will resurface RI-114 West Main Road from Corys Lane to Turnpike Avenue in Portsmouth. This project also includes sidewalk and ADA accessibility improvements along the northbound lane from Anselmo Drive to Turnpike, and southbound from Turnpike to Willow Lane. This project will be followed by TIPID 1360, whose limits range from RI-114 at John Kesson Lane in Middletown up to Mill Lane in Portsmouth (across from the Navy Housing). This project has had its scope expanded to include a shared-use-path with a safe crossing between Stringham Rd. and Mill Ln.

As a commuter, you may understand that we cannot perform these projects simultaneously due to traffic and scheduling conflicts.

**I-23: Claire Thomas**

**City:** South Kingstown

**Submit Date:** 07/02/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-23-1**

I wanted to voice my support for finishing the extension on the William O'Neill bike path. These and other community building projects are so vital to this town, its people, and its economy. My husband and I recently relocated back to the US after a 4 year stint in Berlin, Germany to the gem of a place that is South County. I would say the only thing that we truly miss about

Berlin is the ubiquity of bicycles as a mode of transportation and not just for recreation. Most streets had sidewalks with separate bike ways. The safety given by having designated bike ways made it possible for children and senior citizens to freely bike to school and stores. My husband and I both had healthier lifestyles in Berlin, with more opportunities to move in our everyday coming and going in life. Investing in these projects with higher priority could make South County a healthier and safer place to be a citizen as well as destination for bicycle enthusiasts. The bike infrastructure here could be so much more if people are willing to envision something bigger for the health and wellness of this community and make biking to and from our shopping, school and work part of the norm.

Thank you so much for you time!

Claire Thomas

**Response to I-23-1**

Thank you for your support on TIPID 5089, the William C O'Neill Bike Path Extension (Phase 4B) and encouragement to make more investments of this kind in South County. We appreciate your feedback during this public comment period.

**I-24: Catherine Gervelis**

**City:** Portsmouth

**Submit Date:** 07/02/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-24-1**

Hello,

I am writing to comment on the delay in fixing Sprague St in Portsmouth, RI. My understanding is that the funds are already in place for this two part project - replacing the road and adding sidewalks - so there should be no reason to push this project back to 2031. This road provides access to

Portsmouth High School, and many children use it to walk to school. The condition of the road is atrocious and the lack of shoulder or sidewalk is an accident waiting to happen. This project needs to be a priority for the safely of our children.

Thank you,

Catherine Gervelis

Portsmouth, RI

**Response to I-24-1**

Thank you for your concern regarding TIPID 1377, the resurfacing and sidewalk improvements for Sprague Street in Portsmouth.

Discussions are ongoing with the town and RIDOT regarding the timing of this project. The timeline for this project may be accelerated if new funding is made available from the American Rescue Plan under RIDOT's proposed "Smooth Rhodes" program.

## **I-25: Charles Plungis**

**City:** Portsmouth

**Submit Date:** 07/03/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

### **Comment I-25-1**

The significant delays to Portsmouth roads and sidewalks are unacceptable. Portsmouth is the entrance to the island, Newport, and the Naval Base for a significant number of upstate and out of state visitors and employees, not to mention the significant number of island residents in Portsmouth. The roads do not reflect the outsized contribution of Portsmouth residential and business tax revenue to the state, or that of the rest of the island. There is a significant lack of sidewalks and the roads are insulting. They are certainly worse than they were for our parents, and more highly driven now.

### **Response to I-25-1**

Thank you for your concerns with regard to the various resurfacing and sidewalk improvements throughout Aquidneck Island that are included in this STIP.

In RIDOT's Pavement Capital Program there are 4 projects with limits primarily contained within the Portsmouth town line. These projects are TIPID 1360 (West Main Road from Mill Lane to John Kesson in Middletown), TIPID 1376 (West Main Road from Corys Lane to Turnpike Avenue), TIPID 1379 (East Main Road from Hedley Street to Turnpike Avenue), and TIPID 1380 (East Main Road, Hedley Street to the Middletown Town Line). The Active Transportation Program (ATP) includes the resurfacing of Sprague Street with full sidewalk replacement under TIPID 1377. These five projects account for nearly ten miles of linear roadway resurfacing and almost 130,000 square feet of sidewalk repairs or extension.

Many of the Active Transportation Program investments for this proposed STIP are in the Town of Portsmouth. In addition to the aforementioned Sprague Street improvements, TIPID 5161 will create a shared-use bicycle and pedestrian path that links RI-114 West Main Road to Burma Road along Old West Main and Stringham Road. TIPIDs 9004 and 9005 aim to improve East Main Road will construct a shared use path from Turnpike Avenue in Portsmouth down to Enterprise Center in Middletown. TIPID 5162 will improve cyclist and pedestrian safety on the Mount Hope Bay bike path along Anthony Road and Boyds Lane.

Future pedestrian and motorist safety improvements, including signal improvements where East Main Road meets McCorrie Lane (TIPID 5377), are being investigated at this time.

TIPID 1380, the resurfacing of East Main Road from the Middletown Town Line to Hedley Street, will be addressed at the start of this new STIP window in Federal Fiscal Year 2022 (which begins October 1st, 2021). The timelines for resurfacing projects may be accelerated if new funding is made available from the American Rescue Plan under RIDOT's proposed "Smooth Rhodes" program.

**I-26: jill murphy**

**City:** portsmouth

**Submit Date:** 07/03/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-26-1**

ive lived here since 2015 and always disturbed by the condition of Sprague St.in Portsmouth, RI.

This is a cut through to major route(24), and also a path to the local high school. It appears to be almost abandoned.

What has to be done to shake up a highway dept to fix this mess before my grandson (now 4) walks to high school with any respect for civil engineering

**Response to I-26-1**

Thank you for your concern regarding TIPID 1377, Sprague Street Resurfacing and Sidewalks. This project will resurface Sprague Street from Turnpike Avenue to East Main Road with sidewalk improvements along both sides of the route for that extent. This effort includes sidewalk improvements to bolster pedestrian/student safety towards Education Lane.

This project may be accelerated in the event additional transportation funding is received through the passage of a federal appropriations bill. Furthermore, the authorization of COVID-19 relief funding to be used to fund RIDOT's proposed "Smooth Rhodes" initiative may also accelerate the resurfacing of approximately 30 state roadways. Discussions are ongoing between RIDOT and the Town of Portsmouth regarding the timing of this project.

**I-27: Raymond Harrison**

**City:** Jamestown

**Submit Date:** 07/03/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-27-1**

The road surfaces of the state roads on all sides of the ritba headquarters in Jamestown are in astoundingly bad condition and need to be milled and re-paved soon. The current unreasonable plan to repave in 2027 should be reconsidered. Thanks

**Response to I-27-1**

No final response has been entered.

**I-28: John Morgan**

**City:** Jamestown

**Submit Date:** 07/03/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-28-1**

That road is deplorable and has caused damage to one of my antique vehicles. I now attempt to avoid the area which is difficult due to where I live. Please see that this is replaced much sooner than later. This area gets a large amount of traffic and won't last six more years. It really needs replacement now!!!

**Response to I-28-1**

Thank you for your comment.

It is helpful to specify which road you are expressing concern over its condition. If this comment is in regard to East Shore Road on Jamestown (TIPID 9992), that section of roadway is new to the STIP and was bundled with other improvements on the island that existed in the previous STIP (FFY18-27).

The timeline for the resurfacing of that roadway may be accelerated if new funding is made available from the American Rescue Plan under RIDOT's proposed "Smooth Rhodes" program.

**I-29: Douglas Young**

**City:** Portsmouth

**Submit Date:** 07/04/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-29-1**

The continued pushback of projects on Aquidneck island is adding a tax to the population in the form of increased vehicle maintenance. Driving with on east main road from the Portsmouth town line to the intersection of west main road sounds like feels like your car is a trotting horse. Newport is the premiere tourist location in the state and this is how we introduce people to our state? My infant is unable to sleep on East Main Road every time we drive on it she wakes up.

As for the Sprague Street project. I am a resident off Sprague Street and had to walk to the high school every day for four years and walk to my bus stop for middle school before that. In the winter the lack of sidewalks makes it unsafe. I was forced to walk on mounds of snow watching cars skid by me on under prepared roads. For my own safety I was forced to cut through Fort Butts where I would encounter large snow drifts causing delay to my arrival.

I am active duty military and have just moved back to the area and as a result of these road conditions my vehicles have started squeaking in ways they previously did not. Not due to age mind you, both are under six years old, but due to wear and tear on the suspension.

Please consider moving up the East Main Road and Sprague Street projects.

**Response to I-29-1**

Thank you for your concern regarding TIPIDs 1377 (Sprague Street), 1379 (East Main - Hedley to Turnpike), and 1380 (East Main - Middletown to Hedley) in Portsmouth. Discussions between the State and Town of Portsmouth regarding this project are ongoing.

TIPID 1380 will address some of the areas that are in the most urgent need of repair along East Main Road. This project will start at the beginning of the new STIP window in Federal Fiscal Year 2022, which begins October 1st, 2021. It will be followed by further improvements northward along East Main Road under TIPID 1379.

The timelines for these projects may be accelerated if new funding is made available from the American Rescue Plan (ARP) under RIDOT's proposed "Smooth Rhodes" program. Smooth Rhodes, if approved by the state, would accelerate approximately thirty resurfacing projects throughout Rhode Island.

### **I-30: Patricia Slingluff**

**City:** Jamestown

**Submit Date:** 07/04/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

#### **Comment I-30-1**

No way can the East Shore Rd. By the Newport Pell Bridge office be operational until 2027! It's on the verge of breaking axles now with big pot holes, cracks etc. As a tax payer I am begging the State to fix this short road.....it is heavily traveled as the main way to get off the island, which is probably why it is so damaged. All we need is for our ambulance rushing to a hospital to fall in the pothole.....cars at night may not see the hazards. Fix it!

#### **Response to I-30-1**

Thank you for your concern regarding the section of East Shore Road included under TIPID 9992, the Jamestown Corridor. This section of roadway between Conanicus Avenue and the RITBA Headquarters is new to the STIP and was incorporated into this corridor as part of coordination with the resurfacing of North Road near the Round Swamp.

If the use of American Rescue Plan funds for RIDOT's "Smooth Rhodes" program is approved, may allow for some projects or sections of roadway to have their work timelines accelerated.

### **I-31: Marissa Kapp**

**City:** Manville

**Submit Date:** 07/06/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

#### **Comment I-31-1**

A bus for Manville would be great! We already have bus signs going up Manville hill rd down mendon rd into woonsocket. Or at least expand flex to pick manville residents up

on their way to old river rd. It's very difficult to walk every where with young children and no car, also walking sayles hill is a bit dangerous when you get to the on and off ramps of the highway, plus there is a stretch of road with no side walks. And when the mosk is in session cars line the lane near the guard rail making it difficult to safely walk up to get to the 54... and also when it snows it's a nightmare because the side walks are not shoveled...

**Response to I-31-1**

Thank you for your concerns regarding the proposed STIP for FFY 2022 - 2031. Transit Forward RI 2040, Rhode Island's Transit Master Plan (TMP), calls for a new bus route serving Manville. Additional revenue will need to be added incrementally as discretionary grants and dedicated funding streams are developed to implement the TMP.

The FFY 2022-2031 STIP does have some pedestrian improvements planned for Sayles Hill Road under TIPID 1371. This project will resurface the roadway and perform sidewalk replacement between RI-146 and RI-126 Old River Road at Manville Memorial Park. The scope of this project may be altered to account for additional needs as it approaches the design phase.

**I-32: Jane Roggero**

**City:** Portsmouth

**Submit Date:** 07/06/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-32-1**

The conditions of East Main Road in Portsmouth are deplorable. Certain sections, section south side near St. Mary's Episcopal Church is unavoidable and dangerous as most drivers try to avoid while straddling the line. I drive this section of road two to six times a day. My car rattles relentlessly. My shocks and their coverings are taking the blunt of the use and need to be replaced AGAIN. The patching of the section of road only makes the condition worse. We'd be better off with dirt roads that could be filled with more dirt and leveled with a shovel. All kidding aside, Aquidneck Island roads are deplorable. The state should be embarrassed by the conditions of roads so heavily used by not only the locals but tourists. Please consider completing the road resurfacing as schedule and NOT postponing.

**Response to I-32-1**

Thank you for your feedback regarding the resurfacing of East Main Road in Portsmouth.

The section of East Main Road in front of St. Mary's Episcopal Church is included in TIPID 1380, which is a resurfacing of East Main Road from Hedley Street to the Middletown Town Line. If additional transportation funding under a federal appropriations bill or the receipt of COVID-19 relief funding to fund RIDOT's "Smooth Rhodes" is obtained, projects such as this one may be accelerated. RIDOT recognizes the need to resurface this roadway, and has scheduled it to start at the beginning of the new STIP window in Federal Fiscal Year 2022. Please note that FFY 22 begins October 1st, 2021.



**I-33: Robert Griffin**

**City:** Little Compton

**Submit Date:** 07/06/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-33-1**

Would love to see more of this spent on dedicated bike lanes/paths (i.e. not shared with car users). Linking existing paths would be an especially valuable effort, and bringing paths to towns that are not on the existing network.

Regards,

Rob Griffin

**Response to I-33-1**

Thank you for your feedback on the FFY22-31 STIP.

RIDOT and the Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning remain committed to investments in various forms of active transportation infrastructure. These investments include the maintenance, extension, and creation of both separated and shared-use bike paths throughout the state.

As an example of dedicated bike lane projects, the 6/10 Project, under TIPID 3122, includes funding to link the Woonasquatucket River Greenway to a soon-to-be extended portion of the Washington Secondary Bike Path (see TIPID 5215).

In addition, upon identification of an alignment that is more considerate of local wildlife and natural resources, the William C. O'Neill Bike Path Extension - Phase 4B (TIPID 5089) will create a direct link between the South County Bike Path and recreational facilities at Narragansett Town Beach.

Furthermore, TIPID 9002, paving of the Trestle Trail's West Section, will provide for nearly 5 miles of new bike path that will link the villages of Summit and Greene in Kent County to the Connecticut Greenway. These projects, among others like them in cities like Woonsocket and Newport, represent just one facet of how this STIP addresses the expansion of active transportation modes.

Finally, the STIP's new Corridor Projects Program presents a new opportunity for the incorporation of active transportation investments into larger capital projects at project inception.

**I-34: Graeme Smith**

**City:** Portsmouth

**Submit Date:** 07/06/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-34-1**

I hear there is now a proposed delay to work on Aquidneck Island pushing it out 2 or 3 years.

I understand you must prioritize.

But the light at on 138 at Oakland/Glen Farm is approved and FUNDED.

The continued use of the firebreathing "snot machine" to fill small holes and patches - witnessed again this morning (July 6th, 2021) just creates a discontinuous, rippled mess which merely throws the wear to the edges of the patches - to enlarge and grow again.

138 and 114 are major tourist routes and they are plumb worn out now. Throwing good money into bad holes does not make any sense.

Time to get on with it and adjust the priority before someone gets killed at the Glen Farm intersection.

**Response to I-34-1**

Thank you for your comments on Aquidneck Island projects in the STIP.

The new STIP window is for the fiscal years 2022 to 2031. The signal installation at the intersection of RI-138 with Oakland Farm/Linden Lane is still funded and construction will begin later this year.

Additional work locations for the Traffic Safety Program, including improvements to specific intersections, will be identified as various needs arise throughout the FY 2022 to 2031 STIP window. At this time, the McCorrie Lane intersection with East Main Road has been identified as being in need of improvement (TIPID 5377) and is programmed into the STIP accordingly.

The sealing of cracks, holes, and chips in the roadway is intended to perform a rapid-response to safety hazards on Rhode Island's roadways. These pavement preservation activities are an immediate action that help to preserve roadways in a more proactive manner. The resurfacing of East Main Road throughout Middletown and Portsmouth is scheduled under TIPIDs 1357, 1379, and 1380. The first phase of this resurfacing is scheduled to commence in Federal Fiscal Year 2022, which begins October 1, 2021.

The approval of American Rescue Plan funding for RIDOT's "Smooth Rhodes" program may expedite the resurfacing of these roadways.

**I-35: Kristine Olf**

**City:** North Kingstown

**Submit Date:** 07/06/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-35-1**

How about using the money for bike paths? Every state has these everywhere, especially in the cities. RI is seriously lacking here. NO MORE HIGHWAYS. RI is the SECOND most densely populated state in the US. Are we trying to reach #1?! Let's encourage people to bike everywhere. More people than ever are now biking post covid. Let's take advantage of it and be more environmentally AND health friendly.

**Response to I-35-1**

The STIP's Active Transportation Program contains \$180M, or 6% of capital investments, thereby making Rhode Island a regional leader in active transportation investments. Fifteen projects within the Active Transportation Program provide for direct investments in bicycle facilities. 85% of all system expansion projects in Rhode Island are expansions of active modes of transportation, with some of the remainder including projects whose only expansion consists of sidewalk extension for roadways.

Investments in active transportation are not exclusive to the Active Transportation Program. Projects in the Major Capital Projects program, such as the 6/10 Project (TIPID 3122) and Henderson Bridge (TIPID 3061) will make investments into the creation of new bike bridges or integration of bike lanes onto new structures. Similar investments appear in the Pavement Capital Program and Traffic Safety Program.

**I-36: Mary Oconnor**

**City:** Charlestown

**Submit Date:** 07/06/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-36-1**

While I am not against needed repairs to bridges and roads, the goal should not be create just faster traffic patterns. The goal needs to be to provide options that address the need to reduce carbon emissions including items such as safe bike and walking options. The evidence is clear if you build better roads, there will be an increase in cars using them. If you build better bikeways there will be more people using them. Why is Rhode Island so far behind all the other New England states in terms of bikeways!

**Response to I-36-1**

The projects that are programmed in the STIP are incorporated based on their feasibility and how well they further the goals and objectives of the State of Rhode Island's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) which was adopted in 2020. These goals include Connect People and Places, Maintain Transportation Infrastructure, Strengthen Communities, Promote Environmental Sustainability, and Support Economic Growth.

In the first four years of the STIP, expenditures on pedestrian and bicycle modes will account for 5% of all capital expenditures. In addition, 18% of all projects have a secondary benefit for bicycle and pedestrian improvements. An example of a project which has a secondary benefit

includes a roadway resurfacing that also provide for new sidewalks, such as TIPID 1298 (RI-103 Willet Avenue from Bullocks Point to Kings Gate) in Barrington and East Providence.

Roads are not constructed with only a single mode of travel or type of user in mind. In fact, system expansion projects (projects that expand the transportation network) are dominated by projects that expand the state's bicycle and/or pedestrian network (85%). Among the 11% of projects that expand the "Roads & Bridges" category, the majority are roadway resurfacing projects that are extending sidewalk to improve pedestrian access and walkability. In the limited circumstances where a lane may be added to a roadway for a brief distance, those decisions are often made with user safety as the primary consideration (ex: the I-295 and RI-37 ramps in Cranston).

This STIP makes extensive investments in a variety of bicycle network improvements ranging from maintenance to system expansion. The Trestle Trail (TIPID 9002), Washington Secondary Bike Path (TIPID 5215), South County Bike Path (TIPID 5089), Blackstone River Bikeway (TIPIDs 5293 and 5319), Woonasquatucket River Greenway (TIPID 5178) are all programmed for some form of extension or new construction. The STIP is committed to finding both a temporary and long-term solution to maintain the linkage of the East Bay Bike Path across the Barrington and Warren rivers (TIPID 5005). Shared-use-paths that promote the inclusion of safe cycling on Rhode Island's roadways appear in 3 separate projects in Portsmouth alone (TIPIDs 1360, 9004, 9005). Others appear in major capital projects (Pell Bridge Ramps, 6/10 Project) or are in RIDOT's new Study and Development Program.

### **I-37: Chris Szlatenyi**

**City:** Wakefield

**Submit Date:** 07/06/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

#### **Comment I-37-1**

The STIP should fund transporting PEOPLE, not vehicles. The data shows more and more people opting for cycling and other active modes of transportation despite the poor infrastructure, and these preference are only predicted to increase in the coming years. Car culture is ubiquitous BECAUSE it gets so much funding. Let's not perpetuate the cycle of wider and wider highways inviting more and more traffic. We have a choice to create something better. The people already want better alternatives. 1.8% on active transportation is pathetic. We demand this become a higher priority.

#### **Response to I-37-1**

No final response has been entered.

### **I-38: June Speakman**

**City:** Warren

**Submit Date:** 07/06/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-38-1**

Yes, we have lots of infrastructure needs, and the roads and bridges are receiving long overdue attention. But pedestrian and bicycle paths are essential too, and take some of the pressure off of the car paths. And they're good for the environment, public health, and local businesses. Please ensure that more funding is devoting to ped/bike byways. I, of course, have a particular interest in the two bridges over the Palmer and Barrington rivers. Thank you.

**Response to I-38-1**

Thank you for your feedback on the FFY 2022-2031 STIP.

TIPID 5005 in the Active Transportation Program entails the replacement of the East Bay Bike Path Bridges. This project will commence at the start of the new FFY22-31 STIP window. The Federal Fiscal Year 2022 begins October 1st, 2021.

**I-39: Theodore Pietz**

**City:** Portsmouth

**Submit Date:** 07/07/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-39-1**

To Whom It May Concern,

Please record my objection to the proposed delay in the two paving projects STIP #1379 & #1380. The state of East Main Road in Portsmouth, RI is of utmost concern, including but not limited to the lack of sidewalks on Quaker Hill which represent a major hazard to pedestrians who rely on walking from the senior housing (Quaker Hill Manor) to various medical facilities, drug stores, and the supermarket.

STIP #1379 & #1380 should proceed as originally planned, as there is simply no reason to allow the state of the road to further deteriorate which will only lead to more a costly rehabilitation.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Respectfully submitted,

Ted Pietz

**Response to I-39-1**

Thank you for your comments on STIPIDs 1379 and 1380, which regard resurfacing and sidewalk improvements along East Main Road in Middletown.

TIPID 1380 represents the section of East Main Road that is in the most immediate need of resurfacing. Its limits extend from the Middletown Town Line up to Hedley Street. This project is

scheduled to commence at the start of the new STIP window in Federal Fiscal Year 2022, which begins October 1st, 2021.

TIPID 1379, East Main Road from Hedley Street to Turnpike Avenue, is currently scheduled to begin once the other segment is completed. The project's timeline may be accelerated if additional transportation funding is provided through a federal appropriations bill or if COVID-19 relief funding is authorized for RIDOT's "Smooth Rhodes" initiative.

The pedestrian improvements included within TIPID 1379 include sidewalk rehabilitation and extension. This includes pedestrian improvements in front of Quaker Hill Lane. Because Quaker Hill Lane is not a state road, any suggestions for improvement should be directed to the Town of Portsmouth.

#### **I-40: Lauren Bogues**

**City:** Portsmouth

**Submit Date:** 07/07/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

##### **Comment I-40-1**

I think it is deplorable that you would even consider postponing the resurfacing of East Main Road in Portsmouth. You don't need to be able to see that the road is in despicable condition, just have someone drive you down it and you can feel your back rattling from all the patches put down. It's time to put some effort into Aquidneck Island, RIDOT! There was a crater on East Main Road in front of Seveney Fields on July 3rd that took out a friend tire. It's unfair that you think we can wait YET AGAIN for a fix. Perhaps we shouldn't have wasted money on the sidewalks that 6 people use in the North end of town and focused on the road that EVERYONE uses.

##### **Response to I-40-1**

Thank you for your concern regarding TIPIDs 1379 and 1380.

TIPID 1380, which contains the section of East Main Road in front of Gardner Seveney Complex, is scheduled to commence in 2022, at the very start of the FFY 2022-2031 STIP. The limits of resurfacing under that project run from the Middletown Town Line up to Hedley Street. Federal Fiscal Year 2022 begins October 1, 2021.

TIPID 1379 extends from Hedley Street to Turnpike Avenue. At the request of the Town of Portsmouth, this project includes sidewalk rehabilitation, extension, and traffic safety improvements. Construction of this segment will be coordinated with TIPID 1380.

If American Rescue Plan funding is approved for use in RIDOT's Smooth Rhodes initiative, roads like East Main Road may have their resurfacing timelines accelerated.

**I-41: Judy Menton****City:** Bristol**Submit Date:** 07/07/2021**Submit Method:** Website**Comment I-41-1**

The two bicycle bridges in Warren and Barrington should be at the top of the repair list. These bridges provide safe access on the East Bay Bikepath. These bridges have been closed for repair since 2019, even though there was \$10 million allocated for this repair (per RI Department of Transportation, January 2020). Not a bit of work has been done as yet. This is the second summer without safe access over these bridges by bicycle. While they remain blocked, thousands of travelers are forced across the neighboring motor vehicle bridges, which were never designed to accommodate bikes, scooters, joggers or strollers. The risks are high every day, especially on those school days when hundreds of young Barrington children bike from one side of town to the other. DO NOT WAIT FOR A TRAGEDY TO GET TO WORK ON THIS LONG DELAYED REPAIR OF THE EAST BAY BIKEPATH BRIDGES.

**Response to I-41-1**

Thank you for your feedback on the FFY 2022-2031 STIP.

TIPID 5005, the East Bay Bike Path Bridges is a top priority for RIDOT, which has begun installing a safe, temporary bike path as the agency continues to work with design consultants to find a way to reduce the cost of replacing both bridges which are severely deteriorated. The amount of funding allocated to the repair of these bridges has not been altered in the new STIP, nor has the scope for replacement.

**I-42: Karen Hlynsky****Submit Date:** 07/01/2021**Submit Method:** Email**Comment I-42-1**

I didn't find the mapping tool that you referred to. However, I did search for "Elmwood Ave" and found a reference to new sidewalks on Elmwood south of Roger Williams Ave.

I was disappointed that there was no mention of improvements north of Roger Williams Ave, which is where there have been some serious traffic accidents. There's been some talk of a road diet and/or better traffic management at the intersections of Elmwood Ave with Roger Williams Ave and Cadillac Dr. They are just a block apart. The single traffic light at Roger Williams doesn't manage traffic from Cadillac Dr.

There's also no mention of the request for safer pedestrian crossing at Atlantic and Elmwood.

### **Response to I-42-1**

Thank you for your comments. The STIP Project Dashboard can be accessed from this link: <https://risegis.ri.gov/portal/home/item.html?id=a2122bbbf1434cd6b73d6b2216458c1b>

Regarding your concerns about safety improvements to Elmwood Avenue, at this time, RIDOT, with the approval of the State Traffic Commission (STC), has identified the intersection of Elmwood Avenue and Thackery Street for intersection improvements under TIPID 5376 (2022 Intersection & Crosswalk Improvements: North/Central). RIDOT is actively assessing additional intersections along and segments of the Elmwood Avenue corridor for potential safety improvements. The specific intersections that your comment refers to, where Elmwood Avenue meets Cadillac Drive and Atlantic Avenue, are contained within the area of the City of Providence's proposed CityWalk Improvements for pedestrians. Improvements made by RIDOT along this route require advanced coordination with the City and RIPTA.

Additional improvements may be identified by the State Traffic Commission for investment during the lifespan of this new STIP.

### **I-43: Kevin Essington**

**City:** Providence

**Submit Date:** 07/08/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

#### **Comment I-43-1**

The stated goals of the STIP include "Expand connectivity across modes" "Reduce Travel Congestion" "Improve regional connectivity" "Improve individual and community health" "Foster social equity" "Encourage connected communities" "Reduce vehicle miles traveled" "Reduce transportation greenhouse gas emissions" "Create a network of open space, trails, and paths."

Your \$8.19B plan for the next 10 years of capital funding instead will promote air pollution, VMT, congestion, increased carbon emissions, and lack of connectivity within and between communities.

Only 1.8% of the first four years of the budget (i.e. the funded part) is for walking and biking. Regionally Significant Projects are, with the exception of two transit projects (the new Pawtucket MBTA station and the Amtrak platform at T.F Green), nine very large highway projects. Conversely, Unfunded Regionally Significant projects include only one highway project and four transit projects.

The world is in the midst of a climate crisis and rapid urbanization. What we build today must reflect the rapid changes we will and must make in how we transport ourselves and our goods and services. Instead, the funded commitments feel very much like the same that we have been making for 80 years. And they surely will not meet the plan's goals. It is time to move beyond words about making our transportation system more resilient, people-focused, and sustainable.



It is time to rebuild your budget in this plan to actually put your considerable financial weight behind your goals. I urge you to make many changes to this plan. Accelerate transit and pedestrian projects. Defund new highway and bridge construction and only prioritize roads and bridges that need maintenance.

On a more personal note, I encourage you to accelerate funding the replacement and repair of bridges in Roger Williams Park. They are in urgent need of repair, and long-term closures (due to deficiencies or failure) could create chaos in Rhode Island's most popular municipal park.

**Response to I-43-1**

The Draft FFY 2022-2031 STIP is financially constrained and the State has a limited amount of funding resources. In the event that additional federal funding is received, there may be an opportunity to accelerate project timelines on many of the bicycle and pedestrian projects.

Active Transportation projects account for 85% of system expansion projects projects. In addition, 4% of the system expansion projects are transit-oriented projects and the remaining 11% is dominated by roadway projects whose sole expansion is in sidewalk extension. Active Transportation is a priority in this STIP. Investments in Active Transportation are made in multiple programs beyond the dedicated ATP.

Rhode Island remains ranked among the worst in the nation for bridge condition. The STIP projects reflect a need to improve that standing. The Major Capital, Corridor Projects, and Bridge programs are dominated by projects that aim to replace, rehabilitate, or preserve critically deficient structures.

We appreciate your comments on TIPID 9996. RIDOT and Statewide Planning are aware that these bridges not only support roadways for automobiles, but bike lanes and sidewalks as well.

**I-44: David Raileanu**

**City:** Providence

**Submit Date:** 07/09/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-44-1**

When I think about the great cities and regions of the world, I think about their friendliness, their inviting character, their historical context, their commitment to incorporating and emphasizing their natural beauty. I never, not once, have thought a city great because of its magnificent pavement or its grand interstates. When you consider which projects to move forward to completion, please weigh history, beauty, and character much more highly than you weigh throughput, capacity, and return on investment. I'd rather sit in traffic than allow my tax dollars to pave over a poor person's house.

**Response to I-44-1**

Thank you for your comments on the FFY 2022-2031 STIP. Rhode Island is an historically rich state with a variety of cultural resources to enjoy. All projects are subject to careful review and consideration of historical, cultural, and environmental resources, as well as equity and accessibility issues, through processes that invite and encourage public input. In this update of the STIP, RIDOT, RIPTA, and the Division of Statewide Planning have also worked together to adjust projects so that projects involving those considerations, including historic districts, archaeological resources, and special population groups are allowed ample time for project development, design, and construction. All STIP projects will continue to evaluate these important issues in the future.

**I-45: Ian Kelly**

**Submit Date:** 07/09/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-45-1**

The transportation money should not be used for highway expansion, or dispersing the Kennedy Plaza bus hub into multiple hubs. Neither of these initiatives serve the people of Rhode Island, which, last time I checked, is your one fucking job.

**Response to I-45-1**

The Providence Multi-Hub Project [STIP ID 5204] is included in the STIP, programmed for FFY 2022. This line item supports the creation of expanded, state-of-the-art transportation centers and bus hubs serving rail and bus passengers throughout the City of Providence. The project will establish a strategic hub in the Innovation District, enhance connectivity to the Providence Train Station, and reconfigure Kennedy Plaza.

The creation of a multi-hub system brings many benefits to the transit network, including alleviating congestion at a single-hub and allowing for the physical improvement of pedestrian and transit amenities at several locations. Operationally, the multi-hub system is also not expected to negatively impact bus service to and from Kennedy Plaza as 99.8% of the current passengers that take a 1-seat ride to Kennedy Plaza and downtown Providence can continue to do so once the project is in place.

More information can be found here: [https://www.dot.ri.gov/about/who/docs/Multi-Hub\\_Press\\_Update\\_11-20.pdf](https://www.dot.ri.gov/about/who/docs/Multi-Hub_Press_Update_11-20.pdf).

**I-46: Clayton Commons**

**City:** Portsmouth

**Submit Date:** 07/09/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-46-1**

East Main Road in Portsmouth, beginning just North of the intersection with Fairview Lane, has needed repaving for years. All the patching that has been done only serves to shake your teeth loose. It may serve to reduce speed, though there is no evidence of that; everyone routinely does 50 mph in this 35 mph zone. Certainly the rest of this route needs attention, but this has to be among the worst areas in town.

**Response to I-46-1**

Thank you for your comments regarding the FFY 2022-2031 STIP, and the projects in it that will address East Main Road.

The section of East Main Road that is north of Fairview Lane will be addressed by TIPIDs 1379 and TIPID 1380. The latter will resurface the immediate area of that intersection up to Hedley Street, as well as the remainder of East Main Road southward to the Middletown Town Line. TIPID 1380 will begin in Federal Fiscal Year 2022, which begins October 1, 2021. TIPID 1379 will follow this project.

If American Rescue Plan (ARP) COVID-19 relief funding for RIDOT's Smooth Rhodes initiative is approved, the timeline of these projects may be accelerated.

**I-47: Jean Sharac**

**City:** Bristol

**Submit Date:** 07/09/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-47-1**

Can't we make a difference this time around, instead of just, "same old, same old, business as usual". Active transportation should be the thrust of the next 10 years. As just one example of lack of focus, repairing the bridges along the bike path in Barrington has been at a standstill for years. Of course, road and bridge maintenance is very important, but, the widening of existing roads and installation of new ramps will simply implement induced demand, rather than ease congestion. This is in direct conflict with the STIP draft stated goal of reducing vehicle miles traveled. Seems like RIDOT is talking out of both sides of its mouth.

**Response to I-47-1**

Thank you for your feedback.

Transportation equity, as evidenced in the LRTP and its supplemental plans (BMP, TMP, and CMP), is at the forefront of consideration for STIP projects moving forward. The Congestion Management Plan indicates that roadway expansion is only performed as a last resort to improving the network, and our hope over time is that we continue to implement the measures from the CMP to mitigate congestion in a more efficient way that considers all modes of transportation. With the onset of a more data-driven approach at transportation planning, we have a greater ability to do this in the future. The implementation of the E-STIP will help ensure that all modes of transportation are accounted for and graded accordingly to promote a more

multi-modal approach at improving our statewide system.

TIPID 5005, the East Bay Bike Path Bridges is a top priority for RIDOT, which has begun installing a safe, temporary bike path as the agency continues to work with design consultants to find a way to reduce the cost of replacing both bridges which are severely deteriorated. The amount of funding allocated to the repair of these bridges has not been altered in the new STIP, nor has the scope for replacement.

### **I-48: Daniel Baudouin**

**City:** East Providence

**Submit Date:** 07/09/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

#### **Comment I-48-1**

As an avid bicyclist and walker, a Board member of Grow Smart RI, and a former member of the TAC, I strongly support doubling of the proposed budget for the Active Transportation Program from \$54 million to \$108 million for the period FFY 2022- 2025.

My reasons are as follows:

1. The proposed budget is too small to implement the stated Vision, Goals and Objectives of the STIP. The Vision states that "This Plan envisions a multi-modal transportation network.". The Goals and Objectives include "Promote Environmental Sustainability" by "reducing vehicle miles traveled, reducing transportation greenhouse gas emissions, and create a network of open space, trails and paths". Another goal is "improve individual and community health". For these words to have meaning, significant increases in the Active Transportation Program are required.
2. The draft STIP does not reflect the emission reduction mandates established by the Act on Climate.
3. The State's recently approved Bicycle Master Plan calls for a doubling of spending on bike and pedestrian infrastructure.

The proposed Active Transportation Program funding is only 1.8% of RIDOT's budget, a figure so low that implementation of the STIP's Vision Goals and Objectives, Act on Climate and the Bike Mobility Plan is impossible.

A doubling of the resources will at least result in a credible effort to achieve these goals, objectives, laws, and plans. Funding can be achieved by reducing the massive amount of funds in the proposed TIP for highway expansion.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

### **Response to I-48-1**

Thank you for your feedback on the FFY 2022-2031 STIP.

The STIP is fiscally constrained, with the FFY 2022-2025 period representing the "constrained period" where specific funding sources must be identified for projects. If additional funding becomes available, there may be opportunities to increase funding for various transportation programs. Active Transportation and Traffic Safety are both a high priority in the STIP with an expanding role in this new STIP.

Please note that the proposed Active Transportation Program accounts for \$180M of funding, which represents approximately 6% of all capital project expenditures over the ten year STIP window (FFY2022-2031). Several projects in other programs (Bridge, Pavement, Traffic Safety, etc.) include components of active transportation. These projects include major capital projects such as the 6/10 Project, which includes a bike path connection between the Washington Secondary and Woonasquatucket River Greenway. Those projects, including RIDOT Traffic Safety's Intersection & Crosswalks projects, are not factored into the 6% figure.

The Bicycle Mobility Plan is an important document that informs project development for several state and local agencies. Walking and biking is a healthier and more environmentally friendly way of travel and is the focus of the STIP's Active Transportation program.

### **I-49: William Riccio**

**City:** Johnston

**Submit Date:** 07/09/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

#### **Comment I-49-1**

As a former member and chair of the Johnston Planning Board, I submit this comment in relation to a project that was removed from the TIP, that being The Reconstruction of Hartford Avenue (Route 6A) - Atwood Avenue to Killingly Street. In late 2018, the roadway was resurfaced although no improvements to the existing severely deteriorated concrete curbing and sidewalks were made. Upon inquiry, officials indicated that the roadway repairs were being made as an interim measure as funding constraints required the full reconstruction to be postponed for three additional years (to 2021.) The current draft TIP no longer includes this project which is a major RIPTA bus service route with many stops along this corridor that is also home to our town's senior center, town hall and a new, soon to open, major supermarket chain location (Marketbasket.) Marketbasket recently made improvements to the sidewalks along their frontage likely under the auspices of the RIDOT PAP process; although the remainder of the pedestrian corridor is severely deteriorated or lacks walkable surfaces requiring pedestrians to walk in the roadway shoulder due to access restrictions. Accessibility is missing as many of the surfaces cannot be navigated by wheelchairs as there are pedestrian surface areas comprised of grass, gravel, crushed stone, deteriorated asphalt etc. I appreciate the opportunity to comment and hope that the department can consider re-instating this project to

safely accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists and other vulnerable roadway users to increase safety for all. Thank you.

**Response to I-49-1**

Thank you for your feedback on the FFY 2022-2031 STIP.

RIDOT is aware of the absence of TIPID 1429 in the draft STIP. The project was under review following the 2018 resurfacing, but study of the project indicates that additional work for sidewalks and more thorough resurfacing are required. This project will be reintroduced to the FFY 2022-2031 STIP to complete the repairs on Hartford Avenue.

**I-50: Stephen & Joyce Butler**

**City:** Portsmouth

**Submit Date:** 07/09/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-50-1**

We recently relocated to a new home we built on East Main Road. The road is in very poor condition and the speed of the commuter traffic is more than dangerous. The road seems to be utilized as a highway but in fact it barely facilitates four lanes. Suggest as the Island continues to grow in population and jobs the State invest in a community that certainly adds major value to the R.I. economy and quality of life.

**Response to I-50-1**

Thank you for your comment.

TIPIDs 1379 and 1380 address two segments of East Main Road in Portsmouth. TIPID 1380 addresses the section in poor condition from the Middletown Town Line up to Hedley Street. TIPID 1379 will resurface from Hedley Street to Turnpike Avenue (Clement's Marketplace). TIPID 1380 is scheduled to start in Federal Fiscal Year 2022, which begins October 1, 2021.

RIDOT also applied for American Rescue Plan (ARP) funding by to support the proposed "Smooth Rhodes" initiative, which, if awarded by the General Assembly, may allow for the acceleration of these projects.

**I-51: Judith Byrnes**

**City:** Newport

**Submit Date:** 07/09/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-51-1**

We have a wonderful bike path system in RI. But such a system would never happen today because of misplaced priorities. Case in point are the bridges in Warren Bristol on the

East Bay Bike Path. Why is this not a priority as the current system is unsafe? Are we to wait for a death and a lawsuit?

As for moving Kennedy Plaza buses-who benefits? We know the losers are the most vulnerable among us-shame! More misplaced priorities. And bicyclists, pedestrians, bus riders all pay taxes! What do we get in return?

**Response to I-51-1**

Thank you for your comment on the FFY 2022-2031 STIP.

TIPID 5005, the East Bay Bike Path Bridges is a top priority for RIDOT, which has begun installing a safe, temporary bike path as the agency continues to work with design consultants to find a way to reduce the cost of replacing both bridges which are severely deteriorated. The amount of funding allocated to the repair of these bridges has not been altered in the FFY 2022-2031 STIP, nor has the scope for replacement.

In addition, the STIP includes improvements to and extensions of numerous bike paths throughout the state. TIPID 9002 includes a nearly 5 mile extension of the Trestle Trail bike path from Summit Village in Coventry to the Connecticut State Line. The Washington Secondary Bike Path scheduled for extension under TIPID 5215, and the 6/10 Project includes bike amenities to link the path to the Woonasquatucket River Greenway. Said Greenway is programmed for additional enhancements under TIPID 5178. Improvements to other paths, including but not limited to the Aquidneck Island Bikeway (5161) or Blackstone River Bikeway (5319), are also scheduled.

Regarding TIPID 5204, the creation of a multi-hub system brings many benefits to the transit network, including alleviating congestion at a single-hub and allowing for the physical improvement of pedestrian and transit amenities at several locations. Operationally, the multi-hub system is also not expected to negatively impact bus service to and from Kennedy Plaza as 99.8% of the current passengers that take a 1-seat ride to Kennedy Plaza and downtown Providence can continue to do so once the project is in place. RIDOT and its partners will continue to take feedback and hear from the public throughout this process.

More information can be found here: [https://www.dot.ri.gov/about/who/docs/Multi-Hub\\_Press\\_Update\\_11-20.pdf](https://www.dot.ri.gov/about/who/docs/Multi-Hub_Press_Update_11-20.pdf).

**I-52: Barbara Lents**

**City:** Portsmouth

**Submit Date:** 07/10/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-52-1**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input regarding the maintenance of our roads. Since we moved here nine years ago, East Main Road in Portsmouth has been in a constant state of disrepair. Instead of repaving, only patchwork has been done, except for the area north

of Clement's which only happened because they changed the number of lanes. The dangerous condition that the road is in is made even more treacherous by the narrow lanes and no shoulders. I can see that it would be quite an undertaking to widen the road, given the utility poles' placement just off of the shoulders. I would strongly suggest that East Main is reduced to two lanes with a turn lane in the middle. This would allow for shoulders, which could also be used by bikers. I truly don't think this would cause delays. It would make the road so much safer by eliminating the sudden stops that occur from left turns in the left lanes. We could consider an increase in the speed limit to 40 if there were concerns about the reduction in lanes causing delays.

If this can't be done, please at least repave the road. Beyond being a dangerous stretch of road, it is a terrible impression to give visitors.

#### **Response to I-52-1**

Thank you for your comments on the FFY 2022-2031 STIP and the condition of East Main Road in Portsmouth.

The area of East Main Road south of Clement's Marketplace is programmed in the FFY 2022-2031 STIP. This section, which extends from the Middletown Town Line to Turnpike Avenue, will be addressed by TIPIDs 1379 and 1380. TIPID 1380 will begin at the start of the FFY 2022-2031 STIP window in Federal Fiscal Year 2022, which starts October 1, 2021. It will resurface East Main Road from the Middletown line up to Hedley Street. The remainder, East Main from Hedley to Turnpike, is covered by TIPID 1379. That project will follow the more critical section covered by TIPID 1380.

An assessment of potential safety improvements along East Main Road was undertaken earlier this year, with a similar exercise for West Main Road currently underway. Some improvements, such as an investment in the intersection of East Main Road with McCorrie Lane, have been programmed into the FFY 2022-2031 STIP (TIPID 5377).

#### **I-53: James Seveney**

**City:** Portsmouth

**Submit Date:** 07/10/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

##### **Comment I-53-1**

I am writing to express my concern with the proposed Federal Fiscal Year 2022-31 State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) for RI. My comments are focused on the ten STIP projects related to my Portsmouth constituents. I strongly endorse the adoption of the several amendments the Town of Portsmouth has requested in the Town Administrator's letter of July 8, 2021. I believe these adjustments are reasonable, overdue, and given the poor and worsening condition of the roads in question, an increasing priority for repair. These are heavily used roads for both residents and through- traffic and have become unsafe due to their increasingly deteriorating condition.



The STIP is not just a project management tool, it is an important public communication that Rhode Islander's depend on. It is a commitment to action, it instills public confidence and sets expectations for our stewardship of critical infrastructure that affects daily life. I urge you to maintain that commitment to the current STIP schedules, and specifically to adopt the changes to Project ID's #1377, #1380, #1360 as requested by the Town leadership.

Thank you for your hard work managing our transportation system. Please contact me anytime if I can be of assistance, or provide further information.

**Response to I-53-1**

Thank you, Senator Seveney, for your comments on the Draft FY 2022-2031 STIP.

The state is aware of the urgent need for a resurfacing of East Main Road (TIPIID 1380). That is why RIDOT has included it on a list of projects to be funded by the Smooth Rhodes Program, a request for \$150 million in support from the American Recovery Plan funds made available to the state. This initiative, if approved by the General Assembly, will allow for East Main Road, and dozens of other routes throughout the state, to be resurfaced with an accelerated timeline.

The state recognizes the role that Sprague Street (TIPIID 1377) plays in providing students of Portsmouth High School with a safe route to school. RIDOT will be reaching out to the Town of Portsmouth to discuss how the resurfacing of this road, and the construction of new sidewalks, may be accelerated.

TIPIID 1360 will resurface West Main Road from John Kesson Lane to Locust Avenue alongside repairs to existing sidewalks. We are aware of the role that this road has for traffic bound for NAVSTA Newport and other drivers of the Aquidneck Island economy. As noted previously, the approval of Smooth Rhodes may allow for roadways such as this one to be accelerated.

**I-54: Rodney Burkett**

**City:** Providence

**Submit Date:** 07/10/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-54-1**

Please reallocate more funding for public transit initiatives as developed in the Transit Forward RI 2040 plan. Cities, and neighborhoods in communities such as Providence, Pawtucket and Central Falls can be more effectively served with increased public transit services. In addition to improving air quality, traffic congestion can be reduced thus improving travel by automobiles as well.

Completion of the Pawtucket/Central Falls MBTA station is important to me, and the electrification of MBTA Providence line can improve service between the PVD and BOS significantly. I believe that in addition to improving the experience of travel between the cities for work and or leisure, this could encourage economic development along the corridor in RI.

**Response to I-54-1**

Thank you for your comments on the FFY 2022-2031 STIP, as well as your expression of support for the Pawtucket/Central Falls Train Station.

The FFY 2022-2031 STIP is fiscally constrained, but many projects include improvements prioritized in Transit Forward 2040, also known as the Transit Master Plan (TMP). In addition, TIP ID 7151, Transit Master Plan Investments, sets aside \$64.9 million over the next ten years to fund the development of additional TMP projects with a focus on project development in the constrained years. The outer-years provide larger sums for implementation of fleet enhancements, transit corridor expansion, state match funds to support future federal discretionary grants, or other projects to be developed.

If additional funding becomes available, there could be opportunities to increase funding for public transit initiatives and expanding transportation opportunities for transit users.

**I-55: Chris Menton**

**City:** Bristol

**Submit Date:** 07/10/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-55-1**

A Public comment on State Transportation Improvement Program

Cycling is healthy, an economic lift, good for the environment and promotes alert civil behavior.

Ownership!

The Rhode Island's bike infrastructure can be a positive economic support. Instead, Rhode Island lacks functional connectivity, has numerous designs used that are unsafe for bikes and overall maintenance is severely lacking. Significant improvement could be low cost and generate much good will. The state would be reenforcing support to protect the environment and the safety of its people.

Plans exist for a connector from the East Bay Bike Path with a bridge over the Kickemuit River to the Touisset Bike Path. This project may have been funded but remains undone. Plans have been developed to connect RWU to the EBBP increasing safe access to the University. This project lacks funding. The EBBP itself is closed at vital points due to bridges replacements ignored for years with an unsafe detour partially installed further endangering vulnerable road users.

With beautiful shorelines, forested and farmed country sides, bike access should be functional for commuting and recreation. Electric AV bike trolleys should be established for bikes crossing the Mt. Hope, Newport and Jamestown bridges.

Below is an example of a needed easy fix.

The intersection of the Washington Secondary Trail and Providence Street is awkward and dangerous for users of the trail. The painted crossing is oriented to the Toll Gate Road intersection. A diagonal crossing provides a direct crossing and more queue space for cars to yield to bikes. This would require removal of square curbs, painting and signage.

The website document titled 'MOVING FORWARD RI 20/40'  
Under the long range transportation plan (LRTP) there should be increased focus placing bikes in the forefront.

The Bicycle Mobility Plan should be retitled and re functioned as - bicycle mobility infrastructure deployment. We need to teach as many people as possible to be bike competent, with E-pedal assist where appropriate.

Biking can be an expression of cooperation, courtesy, civility. Denmark, Holland, and other jurisdictions have made a conscious choice to emphasize bicycle usage by developing infrastructure and properly equipping the public.

Public safety needs to assist. The public needs to assist. Rhode Island is a size and density amenable to transforming to a higher rates of bicycling. I propose to flood urban streets with competent cyclists, with federally supported effort to supply more bicycles to people. Particularly people from marginalized populations. This way we are moving in a more fluid fashion. That fluidity makes us strong. It brings us closer moving forward.

Pamela Cotter, RIDOT Policy Director's document, Rhode Island's State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) FFY 2022 - 2031 Rewrite  
<http://www.planning.ri.gov/documents/tip/2021/STIP-Presentation2021.pdf>  
This document contains charts and images that all but ignore bicycle infrastructure. This is immensely disappointing. Biking in Rhode Island can promote tourism and provide inexpensive transportation.

The Draft State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) FFY 2022-2031  
[http://www.planning.ri.gov/documents/tip/2021/Section\"STIP-Background.pdf](http://www.planning.ri.gov/documents/tip/2021/Section\)  
This document only comment regarding bicycle is about injury and death by motor vehicles. Injury and death are reduced with a safer transportation network. Attention and development of safer bicycle infrastructure causes increase bicycle usage.

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Chris Menton is a criminologist and author. He is a student of the bicycle. He rides bicycles to get to work, to explore states and countries, to run errands and a number of other activities. He conducted the first research study of police bicycle patrols, is a nationally certified cycling instructor and a member of the Rhode Island Bicycle Coalition board of directors. He has designed innovative cycles and bikeways. Recently completed National Highway Institute Bicycle Facility Design, Training Course.

**Response to I-55-1**

Thank you for your comments on the FFY 2022-2031 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

RIDOT is aware of the need for a safer active transportation link between downtown Bristol and Roger Williams University. TIPID 1299, Hope Street and Ferry Road Resurfacing and Sidewalks - Phase 2, aims to address that need. The project not only includes roadway resurfacing and repairs to existing sidewalks, but an extension of sidewalks from Burnside and Walley Streets down both sides of RI-114 to the Roger Williams Campus.

TIPID 5005, the East Bay Bike Path Bridges is a top priority for RIDOT, which has begun installing a safe, temporary bike path as the agency continues to work with design consultants to find a way to reduce the cost of replacing both bridges which are severely deteriorated. The amount of funding allocated to the repair of these bridges has not been altered in the new STIP, nor has the scope for replacement.

Regarding the EBBP/Touisset Bike Path connector via the Kickemuit River, this asset could not be constructed. The project to study the linkage, formerly TIPID 5271 in the FFY18-27 STIP, provided funding for a feasibility analysis to determine an approach for a 1/2 mile section of bike path. RIDOT, in collaboration with the Town of Warren, could not identify a suitable alternative for the path that provided effective countermeasures for critical safety concerns.

We appreciate you bringing you concerns with the intersection of the Washington Secondary and Providence Street to our attention. A pavement project, TIPID 1417, includes that intersection within its limits. This project includes sidewalk replacement and handicapped ramp installation. We will refer this concern to RIDOT's Traffic Safety team for further analysis.

**I-56: Sara Burns**

**City:** Providence

**Submit Date:** 07/10/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-56-1**

RI needs investment in side walks and affordable carbon free public transportation, not new highways. Invest in green and complete infrastructure. Plant trees. Manage storm water to store climate change floods and help offset drought.

**Response to I-56-1**

Thank you for your comment on the FFY 2022-2031 STIP.

The FFY 2022-2031 STIP is informed by new mapping analytical tools being used by the Rhode Island Department of Transportation and RI Division of Statewide Planning. Thanks to such tools, RIDOT has identified over 2.5 million square feet of sidewalks that will be repaired or newly constructed as part of the projects in this STIP. This figure will most certainly increase over time, as the effort to measure and map these improvements is still underway.

Active transportation investments are not confined to the Active Transportation Program. Improvements to active modes are considered in the design of new roadways and bridges, or are made in intersection and crosswalk improvements that fall under Traffic Safety. While the Active Transportation Program represents 6% of capital expenditures in the 10-year-plan, accounting for the sidewalks and shared-use-paths that appear in programs like Major Capital Projects or Pavement presents a far more significant and complete picture.

Climate change is a threat that this STIP takes seriously. Using some of the aforementioned analytical tools, RIDOT proactively identifies and accounts for both sea level rise and storm surge flooding in project design. The Stormwater Program represents over \$110 million in expenditures aimed to improve stormwater management and flood control. Again, this figure does not account for the additional improvements made to stormwater under the bridge or pavement programs.

**I-57: Patricia Raub**

**City:** Providence

**Submit Date:** 07/10/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-57-1**

I am writing on behalf of RI Transit Riders to call for an amendment to STIP project #5204 that currently enables the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) to use most of the transit bond approved in 2014 for a purpose the voters didn't intend: to "reconfigure" the Kennedy Plaza bus hub. We believe a project using that funding should be reassigned to the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) to "fund enhancements and renovations to mass transit hub infrastructure throughout the state of Rhode Island" as stated in the language of the 2014 bond. (See attachment for details.)

**Response to I-57-1**

Regarding TIPID 5204, your comments and concerns are heard and noted. The project seeks to improve the existing system for current riders and create opportunities for future expansion of ridership, connect businesses and aid in the continued growth and service of Providence's neighborhoods. Kennedy Plaza will be maintained as a key station within the Multi Hub concept

and the TMP calls for East-West as well as North-South high capacity transit service that will connect multiple hubs in downtown Providence with surrounding areas and neighborhoods. The TMP emphasized the utility of mobility hubs throughout the state to connect high capacity transit and work on the Multi Hub project is being coordinated between RIDOT, RIPTA, and the City of Providence.

**I-58: Karina Carmona**

**City:** North Providence

**Submit Date:** 07/10/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-58-1**

I do not believe this bill adequately covers the needs of transportation in Rhode Island. The bill should rather focus funds towards public transportation and look to decrease vehicle emissions. Expanding highways instead promotes personal vehicle use. Direct funds to Rhode Island's environmentally conscious transportation needs.

**Response to I-58-1**

Thank you for your comments on the FFY 2022-2031 STIP.

Public transportation is critical to the success of Rhode Island's transportation infrastructure. RIDOT's Transit Program represents \$260M in expenditure in the FFY 2022-2031 STIP. This is an investment that will help to reduce congestion on roadways, and by extension limit greenhouse gas emissions.

The STIP is Fiscally Constrained, meaning that the uses for funding (projects) can only amount to the sources provided (budget). In the event that additional federal funding is provided, there may be an opportunity to further increase investment in Rhode Island's public transit infrastructure.

**I-59: Susan Feeley**

**City:** Providence

**Submit Date:** 07/11/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-59-1**

I am very disappointed to see that the STIP includes so few resources for bicycling. We are in the midst of a climate crisis, and we need to dramatically reduce our dependence on cars if we are to address that problem. Increased resources for bicycling is one solution, but this plan doesn't acknowledge this at all.

An equally serious problem, given how many people are immediately affected by it, is the ill-advised approval the STIP gives to using the transit bond money for DOT's plan to break up the

bus hub in Kennedy Plaza. It's truly shocking that an idea so inequitable, and so widely criticized, is being facilitated by those who wrote this plan. I voted for the transit bond money, and I certainly didn't expect it to be used to make use of the bus system more difficult and less efficient for transit users.

**Response to I-59-1**

Thank you for your comments on the FFY 2022-2031 STIP.

This STIP provides for an increase in funding for the Active Transportation Program up to over \$180M. This funding level represents 6% of all capital expenditures in the FFY 2022-2031 STIP. It should be noted, however, that neither the \$180M or 6% figure account for the myriad of Active Transportation investments made in other projects and programs. For example, investments are being made to create a new shared-use path, sidewalks, and Park N' Ride facilities as part of both phases of the Pell Bridge Ramps projects, which are contained within the Major Capital Projects Program.

Regarding TIPID 5204, the project seeks to improve the existing system for current riders and create opportunities for future expansion of ridership, connect businesses and aid in the continued growth and service of Providence's neighborhoods. Kennedy Plaza will be maintained as a key station within the Multi Hub concept and the TMP calls for East-West as well as North-South high capacity transit service that will connect multiple hubs in downtown Providence with surrounding areas and neighborhoods. The TMP emphasized the utility of mobility hubs throughout the state to connect high capacity transit and work on the Multi Hub project is being coordinated between RIDOT, RIPTA, and the City of Providence. As the project continues to develop, there will be additional outreach events planned for areas affected by the proposal.

**I-60: William Alsheimer**

**City:** Portsmouth

**Submit Date:** 07/11/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-60-1**

Both East Main & West Main roads in Middletown and Portsmouth are in need of some much needed replacement. They are both heavily travelled as they serve as the two main arteries on the island! The worst parts are near St. Mary's Church and from Union Street to Sandy Point Ave on East Main. The stretch from Union Street heading in both directions to Roger's Lane on West Main are just as bad. These current road conditions are not only causing damage to our vehicles, they are also dangerous as these "potholes and divots" pull the steering wheel out of your hand causing your vehicle to move into the other travel lane. There are also curb and sewer replacement needed as well as no sidewalks for pedestrians to walk safely to their mailbox or to a school or public transit bus stop! Safety should be DOT's number one concern and the can keeps getting kicked down the road! Projects on both roads have been talked about for 25 years or more and it's time get the ball rolling! Here are a few points to ponder:

1. When is the last time there has been a true traffic study done on those roads?
2. Have you actually seen the volume of traffic at the peak times of the day?
3. I've noticed motorists are becoming angry and aggressive therefore driving erratically to "jockey" for position as well as running red lights so they don't have to wait any longer in traffic.

**Response to I-60-1**

Thank you for your comments on the FFY 2022-2031 STIP.

TIPID 1380 will resurface East Main Road from the Middletown Town Line to Hedley Street. The limits of this project contain the St. Mary's Church and Union-Sandy Point sections mentioned in your comment. It is scheduled to begin at the start of the FFY 2022-2031 STIP window in Federal Fiscal Year 2022. Please note that FFY22 begins October 1, 2021.

A Road Safety Assessment (RSA) study was performed on East Main Road earlier this year in Spring 2021. A similar assessment for West Main Road is ongoing. A signal and turn lane improvement at McCorrie Lane is currently scheduled for work in FFY 2023 (see TIPID 5377). A shared-use path between Sandy Point and Union Street, which includes pedestrian and ADA accessibility improvements, is scheduled for work in FFY2022 under TIPID 9004.

RIDOT monitors travel time delay (TTD) on roadways throughout the state. Roadways are graded and ranked based on this delay, and ranking is one factor in making improvements along the roadway. For a more qualitative approach, RIDOT sends engineers to formally assess roads, and many staff use the routes in their daily routines and are familiar with local traffic chokepoints.

**I-61: Kenneth Burke**

**City:** South Kingstown

**Submit Date:** 07/11/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-61-1**

These projects relate to the Town of South Kingstown. Please consider advancing the Rt. 138 project Contract 1 (ID #1399) from Railroad Avenue to Rt. 108 by one year (start design 2022) to coincide with existing utility work in same corridor and to optimize pedestrian safety improvements. Please also consider pavement management (mill & overlay, including restriping and sharrows and share the road signage) for Main Street in Wakefield from High Street to Rt. 108. Lastly, please consider safety improvements throughout the Rt. 108 corridor from MacArthur Boulevard (crossing of South County Bike Path) to Rt. 138 to include sharrows and share the lane signage and similar markings.

**Response to I-61-1**

Thank you for your comment.

If the state approves a portion of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) COVID-19 relief funding to finance RIDOT's "Smooth Rhodes" initiative, it may allow for the acceleration of pavement



management projects around the state. However, at this time, the Draft FFY2022-2031 STIP is fiscally constrained. If additional funding becomes available, there could be opportunities to increase funding for various programs and solicit new projects from public entities. Current financial constraints prevented the solicitation of new projects.

We appreciate you bringing the desire for safety improvements along RI-108 to our attention. RIDOT will discuss further with its Traffic Safety team. Such concerns may also be brought to the State Traffic Commission.

### **I-62: Kenneth Burke**

**City:** South Kingstown

**Submit Date:** 07/11/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

#### **Comment I-62-1**

Please consider traffic safety enhancements along the Rt. 1 corridor between Westerly and Narragansett to enhance safe bicycle passage along the shoreline. This can be achieved through local roads (for example, Post Road, Old Post Road, Matunuck Beach Road, etc.). The first effort should be a planning level assessment for signage and striping to acknowledge the existing bicycle traffic on these local roads with a focus on enhanced signage and striping. Further efforts could include a focus on safer passage north/south of Rt. 1 at signalized intersections/bridges/or tunnels.

#### **Response to I-62-1**

Thank you for your comment. The draft FFY 2022-2031 STIP is fiscally constrained, meaning that current uses of funding (projects) reflect available sources (overall funding). Due to significant funding limitations the Division of Statewide Planning is not currently extending a solicitation for new projects to enter the FFY 2022-2031 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Due to these funding limitations we do not anticipate a call for new projects to occur until at least 2022 and still subject to funding availability. When an open solicitation does occur, the Division of Statewide Planning will provide notification to all Rhode Island municipalities and stakeholders to submit projects applications for the STIP. Detail guidance on how to submit a project application will also be provided at that time. This is when it would be appropriate to submit new projects for consideration in the STIP.

In the interim, this issue may be investigated further through the Study and Development Program.

### **I-63: Mike Eng**

**City:** Cranston

**Submit Date:** 07/12/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

#### **Comment I-63-1**

I'm a homeowner in RI, parent of a young child, and a daily bicycle and bus commuter. I share a car with my spouse. While car transportation should be part of the picture in our transportation, it should not be the only option. We need more funding and more support for public transit, walking, and cycling to ensure safe, sustainable, and healthy transportation options for all income levels and all ages. While cycling and following the rules of the road, I have been hit by cars four times in the state. Mostly I attribute this to lacking infrastructure for cycling and unaware drivers. I want a future in which my child can travel safely by bicycle throughout our state.

Also, specifically, preserving the central transit hub in Kennedy Plaza rather than splitting it up is an important part of helping people make connections for commuting on RIPTA.

**Response to I-63-1**

Thank you for your comments on the FFY 2022-2031 STIP.

RIDOT and the Division of Statewide Planning are aware that walking and biking is a healthier and more environmentally friendly way of travel. These modes are the focus of the STIP's Active Transportation Program. The 10-year spending program laid out in the STIP seeks to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety through investments in sidewalk and pavement infrastructure. In addition, several projects in other programs (Bridge, Pavement, Traffic Safety, etc.) include components of alternative transportation.

Regarding TIPID 5204 (Kennedy Plaza), the project seeks to improve the existing system for current riders and create opportunities for future expansion of ridership, connect businesses and aid in the continued growth and service of Providence's neighborhoods. Kennedy Plaza will be maintained as a key station within the Multi Hub concept and the TMP calls for East-West as well as North-South high capacity transit service that will connect multiple hubs in downtown Providence with surrounding areas and neighborhoods. The TMP emphasized the utility of mobility hubs throughout the state to connect high capacity transit and work on the Multi Hub project is being coordinated between RIDOT, RIPTA, and the City of Providence. As the project continues to develop, there will be additional outreach events planned for areas affected by the proposal.

**I-64: Nina Wolff Landau**

**City:** Providence

**Submit Date:** 07/12/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-64-1**

Overall, the plan completely fails to invest adequately in pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure. All of these areas are of great need and are greatly supported for a public investment by residents of the state. Instead, this plan largely includes the harmful business as usual of investing in highway expansion. Additionally STIP project No. 5204 gives RIDOT authority to use the transit bond voters approved in 2014 for improving Kennedy Plaza to break

up the hub against the objections of every neighborhood, transit, and environmental group. This STIP spells continued disaster for Rhode Island to build an effective transportation system and fight the climate crisis in a way that supports all people, especially people of color and low-wealth people.

**Response to I-64-1**

Thank you for your comments on the FFY 2022-2031 STIP.

This STIP represents an increase in investment to active transportation to \$180 million over 10 years. Six percent of all capital expenditures in this STIP are contained within the Active Transportation Program (ATP). An additional \$87.9 million in the Traffic Safety Program provides for investments in intersections and crosswalks to improve user safety throughout the state, for all modes of travel. Projects in programs beyond the ATP contain improvements to pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, from sidewalk reconstruction and extension (TIPID 9536 or 1298, to provide an example for both), to the shared-use bicycle paths that appear in projects like TIPID 1360 or the Henderson Bridge.

Regarding TIPID 5204, your comments and concerns are heard and noted. The project seeks to improve the existing system for current riders and create opportunities for future expansion of ridership, connect businesses and aid in the continued growth and service of Providence's neighborhoods. Kennedy Plaza will be maintained as a key station within the Multi Hub concept and the TMP calls for East-West as well as North-South high capacity transit service that will connect multiple hubs in downtown Providence with surrounding areas and neighborhoods. The TMP emphasized the utility of mobility hubs throughout the state to connect high capacity transit and work on the Multi Hub project is being coordinated between RIDOT, RIPTA, and the City of Providence. The project is anticipated to generate a net benefit to RIPTA riders and the transit system as a whole.

**I-65: JAMES VOGEL**

**City:** South Kingstown

**Submit Date:** 07/12/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-65-1**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the 2022-2031 State Transportation Improvement Program.

I applaud the state's effort with STIP and the Statewide Bicycle Mobility Plan. As a resident of South Kingstown, I support the listed projects of : 3399, 1397, 1399, 1576, 1400 and 3135, as well as the general projects to improve sidewalks and crosswalks.

I want to point out to the Transportation Advisory Committee that the Town of South Kingstown has a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, which can be used to support the planned projects as well as suggest more. In it, we stress traffic calming and pedestrian and bicycle

access within the town. These include specifics for state roads including Routes 1, 1A, 138, 110, and 108.

Cycling on Route 1 in South County is very risky. The Eisenhower Federal Highway Act, made Route 1 into a divided highway suitable for car and truck travel, with little to no consideration for cyclists. Route 1 separates the south shoreline from the rest of the state, and is very difficult for pedestrians and cyclists to cross from South Kingstown, through Charlestown and into Westerly. One key feature we discuss in the plan is a safe Route 1 Crossing, "a bridge to the shore" for Bicycles and Pedestrians.

I propose this link to be at the Post Road, where 1A ends on the south side of Route 1 and Post road goes to Main Street, Wakefield on the Northside of Route 1. This would provide a link to the shore from Wakefield Center, URI, Kingstown Train Station, and the South County Bike Path, and Narragansett. On the south side the link will lead the beaches, to Charlestown and Westerly. An example of this bridge is the Legacy Trail Bridge in Venice Florida, which crosses US 41.

I see this planning effort as a real opportunity to affect the quality of life of our residents and to promote Rhode Island as a destination for active, health conscious travelers.

Thank you again for the opportunity

These are similar to my in person comments at the 29 June 2021, public Comment Meeting in Narragansett, and are in support of and build on the comments of David Hamel, South Kingstown, Faith la Bossiere, Charlestown, and Rosemary and David Smith, Narragansett.

James Dean Vogel

Link to the South Kingstown Bicycle and Pedestrian

Master Plan:<https://www.southkingstownri.com/DocumentCenter/View/5605/Bicycle-and-Pedestrian-Master-Plan-July-2020>

Link to the Legacy Trail Bridge:<https://drmp.com/expertise/construction-services/bridge-construction-engineering-inspection/legacy-trail-pedestrian-bridge-over-us-41><https://www.dougarnesauthor.com/2017/02/importance-of-legacy-trail-bicycle-bridge-Venice-Florida.html>

#### **Response to I-65-1**

Thank you for your comments.

The Bicycle Mobility Plan is an important document that informs active transportation project development for several state and local agencies. Walking and biking is a healthier and a more environmentally friendly way of travel and is the focus of the STIP's Active Transportation program. In addition, several projects in other programs (Bridge, Pavement, Traffic Safety, etc.) include components of active transportation.

The FFY 2022-2031 STIP is fiscally constrained, and current funding amounts are limited. If new

funding is made available, there may be an opportunity to increase investment in various programs for projects to be accelerated or incorporated into the STIP. RIDOT is introducing a Study and Development Program with this STIP to investigate transportation improvements throughout Rhode Island.

**I-66: Susanna Yim**

**Submit Date:** 07/12/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-66-1**

I believe if a person needs to pick up their medication, go to school/work, go to the doctor's, see a family member -- they should be able to do that with no trouble. In Boston, in New York, in D.C. -- people are able to rely on public transportation. The majority of people living in these areas use public transportation because it is efficient, because it is sustainable, because it serves the people. That's not the case in Rhode Island. It's time we change that. It's time we invest in improving our public transportation system and make it accessible for one and all. Many Rhode Islanders cannot afford to sustainably pay for gas, insurance, car payments, parking, etc. If you care about racial justice, inclusivity, making a concrete difference for your constituents -- focus on improving our public transportation, not widening the gaps by building highways.

**Response to I-66-1**

Thank you for your comments on the FFY 2022-2031 STIP.

Public transportation is critical to the success of Rhode Island's transportation infrastructure. RIDOT's portion of the STIP includes \$260 million to support improvements in Transit facilities, infrastructure, and services, in addition to RIPTA's programming which totals more than \$1.5 billion. These include investments in improving public transit, reducing congestion on roadways, and by extension, limiting greenhouse gas emissions.

The STIP is Fiscally Constrained, meaning that the uses for funding (projects) can only amount to the sources provided (budget). In the event that additional funding is provided, there may be an opportunity to further increase investment in Rhode Island's public transit infrastructure.

**I-67: Shelby Mack**

**City:** Bristol

**Submit Date:** 07/12/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-67-1**

Transportation emissions account for a major percentage of all fossil fuels emissions. As the planet burns and climate change already causes mass suffering around the world, we need to move towards greener forms of transportation. Why does this plan prioritize highway

expansion while deprioritizing other forms of transport? This is unacceptable. We must be part of the solution, not part of the problem. We are out of time.

**Response to I-67-1**

Thank you for your comments on the FFY 2022-2031 STIP.

Active Transportation is a priority in this STIP and has seen an increase in investment from where it was in the FFY 2018-2027 STIP. The Active Transportation Program is just one home for a plethora of investments to expand active, healthful modes of transportation for Rhode Islanders. In addition, 85% of all system expansion projects are classified as bicycle or pedestrian projects,, 4% are for transit, and the remaining 11% is dominated by projects classified as roadway expansion whose only extension is an extension of sidewalk.

Through investments in active transportation, transit, congestion mitigation, and further study of new transportation opportunities the FFY 2022-2031 STIP is designed to build resilience in transportation infrastructure and mitigate the impact of climate change.

**I-68: Daniel Thomas**

**City:** South Kingstown

**Submit Date:** 07/12/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-68-1**

This comment indicates my strong support for improved cycling infrastructure in the State of Rhode Island. Although there exist a few wonderful bike paths in our state, there remains much need for additional infrastructure. Cycling provides an excellent opportunity to connect with nature, establish new relationships in our communities, and reduce our environmental impact. Above all, cycling is just tons of fun. I'm lucky enough to live in South Kingstown, where the William C. O'Neill bike path is one of the most prominent and important public works. For me, this path is not only about recreation, as I utilize the path to travel to work at the University of Rhode Island every weekday. The path is no doubt worth the investment to the local community, increasing property values, providing traffic to local businesses, and improving the quality of life here in South Kingstown. I would love to see other opportunities for residents of Rhode Island to experience the wonder and joy of riding their bicycles, whether for commuting or for recreation. I would especially emphasize the importance of completing the William C. O'Neill bike path to Narragansett Town Beach. Currently, cyclists are left to ride on the road for the final mile or so, which creates a dangerous situation and especially prevents children from safely traveling to this beautiful destination. I am certain that the completion of the bike path will have similar benefits for the Town of Narragansett that are currently experienced by South Kingstown.

**Response to I-68-1**

Thank you for support of TIPID 5089, the William C. O'Neill Bike Path Extension - Phase 4B. The STIP and this project are a reflection of the State's commitment to finding a permissible route that links this key pathway to Narragansett Town Beach. The State will continue to coordinate with the Town of Narragansett in this effort to complete the last segment of the William C. O'Neill Bike Path.

**I-69: Susan Marcus**

**City:** Wakefield

**Submit Date:** 07/12/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-69-1**

The Draft FFY 2022-2031 STIP deepens our auto-centric culture just as we should be moving in a more sustainable direction.

To its credit, it will keep our commuter rail and bus systems going and it will finish the Pawtucket-Central Falls commuter rail station. But where are additional funds for the extra buses needed to increase service as called for in the TMP? The Draft STIP also seems to have overlooked additional funding for the electrification of vehicles or the commuter rail.

STIP project 5204 should not give RIDOT the authority to "reconfigure" the Kennedy Plaza bus hub. RIDOT has no experience with designing or operating a bus system, and their break-up plan is adamantly opposed by riders, community groups, civil rights activists, planners, environmentalists and the Providence City Council.

You can strip the STIP of several expensive road building projects as far as I'm concerned:  
\$205 million more for widening I-95 northbound on the Providence Viaduct  
\$52 million to rehab the nearby Civic Center ramps  
\$78 for I-295-Route 37 ramps that also widens 295 in the "Cranston Canyon"  
\$78 million for Route 146 including an overpass at the Sayles Hill Rd  
\$111 million for two projects on I-195 including new ramps and a short additional lane.

Highway infrastructure once built is expensive to maintain. Maintaining infrastructure on I-295, a relatively new road, total at least \$83 million. Refurbishing the Huntington Viaduct will cost about \$94 million, a small section of Route 113 about \$28 million.

Meanwhile, RIDOT has been reluctant to spend the \$20 million or so to repair the East Bay Bike Path bridges that have led to dangerous conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians on Route 114.

Some congratulations are due. RIDOT seems genuinely trying to improve our bridges and fix the pavement, deal with stormwater, finish the Pawtucket-Central Falls commuter rail station.

Gradually, they are continuing to extend the bike paths. The Providence-Newport Ferry operates again.

**Response to I-69-1**

Thank you for your comments on the draft FFY 2022-2031 STIP.

Regarding TIPID 5204, your comments and concerns are heard and noted. The project's focus continues to be the improvement of the existing system for current riders, and look towards opportunities for future expansion of ridership, businesses and to aid in the continued growth and service of Providence's neighborhoods. Kennedy Plaza will be maintained as a central location within the Multi Hub concept. Project goals continue to include improving the bus hub system so that both riders and business see the advantages in growing public transportation. The concepts, innovations and analysis that are being used and developed are driven by local and national public transportation experts, including the RIPTA team. This project is a key component of our state's Transit Master Plan and as such sharing coordination with the Providence Station project and the City of Providence's Park Development.

TIPID 5005, the East Bay Bike Path Bridges is a top priority for RIDOT, which has begun installing a safe, temporary bike path as the agency continues to work with design consultants to find a way to reduce the cost of replacing both bridges which are severely deteriorated. The amount of funding allocated to the repair of these bridges has not been altered in the new STIP, nor has the scope for replacement.

**I-70: Sarah Liew**

**Submit Date:** 07/12/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-70-1**

I just wanted to submit a comment requesting that fund allocation be focused on improving public transportation and bikeways for the state. Every other country that I have traveled to surpasses the US in every way around public transportation. We have opportunities to improve accessibility and efficiency, which is a major win for everyone and the environment. I for one would absolutely prefer to use public transportation rather than a car every day of the week but currently cannot because Rhode island's bus system is slow and outdated.

Thank you!

**Response to I-70-1**

Thank you for your comments and suggestions on the Draft FFY 2022-2031 STIP.

Active transportation and investments in public transit by both RIDOT and RIPTA remain as key priorities for this STIP. In the design of all projects, including bridges and roadways, RIDOT considers the potential to integrate key improvements for amenities such as dedicated bus lanes, Park N' Rides facilities, or Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations. RIDOT and RIPTA are



working closely together to implement many of the recently-completed Transit Master Plan to give buses more of a priority on our roadways through bus lanes, signal priority, bus-on-shoulder, etc., so trip times can be reduced in and out of Providence where feasible.

The STIP is fiscally constrained, meaning that the current list of projects reflects the availability of funding. In the event that additional funds are made available, there is a possibility that increased investments will be made to expand public transit and active transportation options.

**I-71: Kayla Krupa**

**City:** Foster

**Submit Date:** 07/12/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-71-1**

Rhode Island needs greener transportation infrastructure. Expanding highways should NOT be our priority as we live in a world where individual transportation is already catered to too much. With urban areas growing, our money should be spent on having more walking and biking accessibility, as well as public transport for both urban and rural areas. We don't have the time to spend our money on things that further hurt the environment, so we need to act now.

**Response to I-71-1**

Thank you for your comments and suggestions on the Draft FFY 2022-2031 STIP.

This STIP includes increased investment for Active Transportation versus the prior, FFY 2018-2027 STIP with \$180M in funding allocated over the ten year window. 85% of all projects that expand the transportation network are bicycle and pedestrian projects. It also represents a continued commitment to investing in the maintenance, improvement, and expansion of Rhode Island's public transportation network, as 4% of all system expansion projects are in public transit. The remaining 11% is dominated by roadway projects whose sole expansion is in the extension of sidewalks.

**I-72: Jessica de la Cruz**

**City:** North Smithfield

**Submit Date:** 07/12/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-72-1**

I am the state senator from District 23 proudly representing North Smithfield, Burrillville and Glocester. Please allow this letter to serve as my comments on behalf of countless constituents regarding the proposed Federal Fiscal Year 2022-2031 State Transportation Improvement Program.

We are extremely concerned about a proposed change to a crucial repaving project in the Town of Gloucester. As I am sure you are aware, Route 94, Reynolds Road (STIP ID 1329) from the Foster town line to US-44, was originally scheduled for repaving in 2019 and delayed until 2022. This project is currently shown in funding years 2022 - 2024 with a \$7.3 million budget. The proposed 2022-2031 STIP will delay this project even further to 2024-2027 with a budget of \$6.4 million. I cannot emphasize enough as a lawmaker who listens very carefully to the constituents of this area, this continuous scheduling delay and reduced project budget are inexplicable.

This portion of Route 94 has been a dangerous and recurring issue for the town. Since 2015, the Gloucester Police Department has investigated approximately 53 motor vehicle accidents, including a fatality (one too many) and several others resulting in serious bodily injury. The deplorable road surface has been a contributing factor in several of these incidents. The police have received numerous complaints from drivers concerning the temporary "repairs" and surface condition. This has required repeated calls to RIDOT to repair the temporary fixes. The chief of the West Gloucester Fire District has also persistently expressed concerns that the road in its current state is a hazard for first responders and emergency equipment.

My understanding is that based on the horrid safety studies the RIDOT committed to move forward with the implementation of several of the recommended projects including resurfacing the approaches. Four years ago, RIDOT resurfaced a short stretch of Route 94 at the FM Research Campus entrance. While these incremental steps to improve the roadway have been welcome, I believe that the area needs to be addressed in its entirety, coordinating the safety improvements and the roadway improvements.

This is a critical project that must be completed immediately without further delay. Pushing the repaving project even further into the future poses a clear and present threat to anyone who travels on the road. I urge the Transportation Advisory Committee and the State Planning Council to reject all efforts to further delay these much-needed improvements on Reynolds Road. Please feel free to contact me at most any time with questions and thank you for your attention to this matter.

**Response to I-72-1**

Thank you, Senator, for your comments and input on the FFY 2022-2031 STIP.

STIP ID 1329, Route 94/Reynolds Road, is a key priority for RIDOT for all the reasons you mentioned, and one RIDOT highlighted in its portion of the STIP presentation to the TAC in May. That is why the department included it on a list of projects to be funded by the Smooth Rhodes Program, a request for \$150 million in support from the American Recovery Plan funds made available to the state. If the General Assembly votes to make Smooth Rhodes funding available to RIDOT, then this project may be accelerated, along with dozens of other pavement projects around the state.

**I-73: Katherine Donato****City:** Barrington**Submit Date:** 07/12/2021**Submit Method:** Website**Comment I-73-1**

Please consider adding an urgently needed sidewalk (or bike lane) along Sowams Rd from Coach Murgo Ln to Columbus St. in Barrington. There is no longer bussing provided to the elementary schools which causes a dangerous situation with young children walking and biking to school. Drivers regularly exceed the speed limit by 15-20mph. Speed measurement signage and police patrol car presence has not helped. This is a tragedy waiting to happen! Kids will be hurt! You can fix this issue quickly and inexpensively with a sidewalk of under one mile. Please reconsider safety of kids as a top priority.

I have an additional concern regarding the closed bridges on the East Bay Bike Path in Barrington and Warren (Palmer river) where the RIDOT adjustments such as barricades, signage, and painting have made the situation more dangerous for bikers and drivers. Several accidents have already occurred and a forthcoming fatality would surprise no one observing the traffic flow in real life. Please rebuild the bike path bridges as soon as possible.

Thank you for reading my comments.

**Response to I-73-1**

Thank you for your comment on the Sowams Road Sidewalks. In response to requests like this one, the STIP has a project under TIPID 13002 in the new Study and Development Program that will further investigate the installation and improvement of sidewalks along the entirety of Sowams Road from RI-103 County Road to New Meadow Road.

TIPID 5005, the East Bay Bike Path Bridges is a top priority for RIDOT, which has begun installing a safe, temporary bike path as the agency continues to work with design consultants to find a way to reduce the cost of replacing both bridges which are severely deteriorated. The amount of funding allocated to the repair of these bridges has not been altered in the FFY 2022-2031 STIP, nor has the scope for replacement.

**I-74: Michelle Martins-Botelho****City:** East Providence**Submit Date:** 07/12/2021**Submit Method:** Website**Comment I-74-1**

I'm writing to you today to implore you to no longer delay or push back the timeline for TIP ID#9525 (Pawtucket Ave Roadway and sidewalk improvements: Veteran's Memorial Parkway to Warren Ave) for the City of East Providence. Consideration to review and increase the project's overall funding is also requested. Many of the sidewalks along this main thoroughfare in East

Providence are original to the WPA era and are in dire need of being replaced as they pose ADA and liability issues for the City and State. The roadway is also in desperate need of repair and poses a safety concern for all that travel this State road.

This project was formally requested over a decade ago by the City back in 2011 for the FYE 2013-16 STIP. The Project has since been pushed back multiple times and is now on the schedule for FY2028-31. I should note that since the Project's 2011 request, the EP School Department increased the minimum distance for bus transportation, forcing more students to walk to school along the route.

Any assistance that you can provide to move up the request or, at a minimum, maintain the current schedule would be greatly appreciated!

Sincerely,

Michelle Martins-Botelho  
East Providence Resident

**Response to I-74-1**

Thank you for your comments on TIPID 9525, Pawtucket Avenue from Veterans Memorial Parkway to Warren Avenue. The scope of TIP ID 9525 does include rehabilitation of more than 110,000 square feet of sidewalk along the Pawtucket Avenue corridor. There may be an opportunity for this project to be accelerated if RIDOT receives American Rescue Plan funding from the General Assembly to support the Smooth Rhodes initiative, which would accelerate dozens of resurfacing projects throughout the state.

**I-75: Mycala McKay**

**City:** Providence

**Submit Date:** 07/12/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment I-75-1**

While I appreciate that this plan is going to fix roads throughout the state, I am sad to see the main focus here is on our highway system. We need more busses on the road, and we need to invest in systems that benefit all communities; public transit does just that. I urge you to update this plan to match the needs of Rhode Islanders, by putting money into our bus hubs and further investing in public transit. Highways benefit those who drive cars, we have big enough long enough highways. We know that wider highways and more ramps don't make travel easier, it means more cars will be on the road, we need to invest in accessible transportation that is sustainable. more cars= more emissions.

**Response to I-75-1**

Thank you for your comments on the FFY 2022-2031 STIP and your support for public transit initiatives.

This STIP reflects a continued investment by RIDOT, RIDSP, and RIPTA to improve the state's public transit infrastructure. Some of these investments include the roadway projects that include dedicated-bus-on-shoulder improvements, the expansion of bus hubs at CCRI and URI to improve accessibility to education centers, upgrades to modernize Providence Station so it becomes a true intermodal transportation center, completion of a new MBTA station in Pawtucket, and engineering for a new Amtrak stop at TF Green Airport.

## **I-76: Peter Brassard**

**City:** Newport

**Submit Date:** 07/12/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

### **Comment I-76-1**

The Rhode Island Association of Railroad Passengers (RIARP) was formed in 1972 by a group of Rhode Islanders concerned about the future of passenger rail service in the state. RIARP is a volunteer local organization advocating for improved intercity and commuter passenger rail service in Rhode Island and throughout New England. RIARP is loosely associated with the Rail Passengers Association (aka National Association of Rail Passengers or NARP).

Mass Transit - We believe that the recently adopted Transit Master Plan (TMP) is of vital importance and a critical element of the STIP. The TMP addresses an essential piece of transportation, which sets the foundation for the state's economic vitality and expansion. An integrated robust rail and bus Mass Transit system offers the state's residents and visitors with safe and convenient mobility across the state and the region and gives employers greater access to a larger work force, by getting people where they need to go quickly, efficiently and affordably. To ensure that the TMP is a success, there needs to be an investment schedule aligned with the TMP for implementation.

In addition, we are calling your attention to STIP project #5204 that gives RIDOT authority to reconfigure the Kennedy Plaza bus hub, this means to break up the central bus hub, without any suitable alternative, and disperse bus stops among several downtown hubs. The result would be making the system more confusing to navigate and less convenient for existing and future riders. A central bus hub and its proximity to Providence Station is essential for both bus transit, and commuter and intercity rail service to expand and succeed. Transit riders, planners, environmentalists community groups, civil rights activists and the Providence City Council have all opposed the break-up of a central bus hub. We believe that this project would have a negative impact on transit and rail ridership.

We oppose the breakup of the central bus hub into multiple smaller hubs around downtown Providence. However, if ultimately the state decides to abandon the central bus hub at Kennedy Plaza, we encourage state planners to reconsider co-locating a central bus hub adjacent to Providence Station as was proposed in a 2018 RFP process that was led by RIDOT. A combined Rail and Bus station, where transfers can be easily and seamlessly be made between

various transportation modes will enhance transportation and help to meet climate objectives in the state.

Rail Improvements - For Rhode Island to remain competitive, it is essential that the local commuter rail system, provided by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) become fully electrified. In 2019 the MBTA Fiscal and Management Control Board (FMCB) approved the electrification and purchase of electric trains for the Providence Line, which serves Rhode Island. Improvements to commuter rail will enhance Amtrak's ability to provide intercity rail service within the state.

The following includes necessary improvements to improve commuter rail and intercity passenger service in Rhode Island:

Rail Electrification on the Northeast Corridor (NEC)

- o Rail sidings at Warwick-TF Green/Hills Grove and Wickford Junction stations
- o Pawtucket storage/service rail yard
- o The FRIP or 3rd track between Warwick and Providence Station

Add electric capacity at the Warwick (NEC) electric substation for implementation of electrified commuter rail service

Construction of the Amtrak Station at TF Green/Hills Grove. The fourth track that would be built at the station will benefit both Amtrak and commuter rail service at this location.

Extending the rail siding at Wickford Junction south over Route 102 and rejoining the NEC mainline tracks, which would allow for potential commuter trains to be extended to West Davisville and Kingston.

If Connecticut's Shoreline East (SLE) commuter rail service (currently New Haven-New London) was to be extended farther north into Rhode Island, it would be necessary for SLE to extend to at least Kingston. But preferably SLE commuter trains should go all the way to the airport station in Warwick. The turning of commuter trains at Westerly would not be ideal from an operational standard. Kingston has a third track which could handle the reverse movement and a new station at the airport would allow for Southeastern Connecticut and South County passengers transfers to TF Green Airport.

Provide funding and coordinate with the MBTA to increase train frequency from Providence to TF Green Airport to up to four trains per hour seven days per week.

There is a need to have weekend service south of Providence. Implement weekend commuter rail service extending to Wickford Junction.

**Response to I-76-1**

Thank you for your comments, concerns, and recommendations for the FFY 2022-2031 STIP.

The state is in agreement that the Transit Master Plan is a document that should help to inform the priorities of the STIP and guide investment.

Your concerns regarding TIPID 5204 are noted. The focus of the project continues to be the improvement of the existing system for current riders, and look towards opportunities for future expansion of ridership, businesses and to aid in the continued growth and service of Providence's neighborhoods. Kennedy Plaza will be maintained as a central location within the Multi Hub concept. Project goals continue to include improving the bus hub system so that both riders and business see the advantages in growing public transportation. The concepts, innovations and analysis that are being used and developed are driven by local and national public transportation experts, including RIPTA. This project is a key component of the Transit Master Plan and as such sharing coordination with the Providence Station project and the City of Providence's Park Development. In addition, this project reflects a continued commitment to improve RIPTA access into and out of Providence Station. One of the multi-hub locations is located at Providence Station.

Regarding the rail improvements, many of these are consistent with state's new Transit Master Plan (TMP), including future MBTA electrified service and infrastructure, TF Green Amtrak stop, Pawtucket Layover improvements, and increased weekday and weekend commuter rail service. Both RIDOT and MBTA continue to work together on Phase I of Rail Vision, and explore all grant opportunities for enhanced regional rail along the NEC between the two states. RIDOT's ongoing and continued investments in Providence Station will establish that facility as a leading transportation hub for the state and the region. As we come out of the pandemic, which significantly impacted ridership on all rail services nationwide, it's going to be critical to advance many of these TMP initiatives, including cross-honoring of Amtrak and MBTA trains, as a way of bringing riders back.

The state continues to work alongside agencies from neighboring states, such as the MBTA, and regionally through the Northeast Corridor Commission, towards creating a more robust and accessible rail network in the Northeast. An expansion of intercity, commuter rail and freight rail along the NEC are crucial investments for our economy and electrification and faster more frequent service to/from Boston continues to be a priority as our states reopen.

**I-77: Grant Dulgarian**

**Submit Date:** 07/12/2021

**Submit Method:** Other

**Comment I-77-1**

I'd like to offer some thoughts regarding RIPTA. Number one Kennedy Plaza should not be dismembered and that's a terrible idea. I'm a disciple of Joe House who was a professor RISD back in the 70s and he created interface Providence which encouraged the handful of disparate bus stops around downtown to come together and his proposal was to have them come together underneath the train station which was located in downtown, separated perfectly and

that way would have made a transition easy from rail to bus, bus to rail but we can tell that there are bus stops in Kennedy Plaza but then subsequently, unfortunately in the 80s side were going to relocate the train station to the edge of the state house lawn and ever since then we've been trying to reconnect the train station with downtown and spend a lot of money trying to figure that out but obviously once you make an irreversible decision, it is irreversible. As far as Kennedy Plaza is concerned, the City looked at a few alternatives 3 or 4 years ago, but none got implemented. DOT wants to spread them apart. My suggestion is to consolidate the two directions of RIPTA busses. Put both directions of busses on Washington Street. This is unburden Fulton Street with bus traffic, and address some concerns of property owners on this block. It would cost very little money to do this. In addition, bus shelters don't do much sheltering at Kennedy Plaza. Could we add heaters to the bus shelters? They could be turned on and off remotely, it would be very passenger friendly. Another recommendation - digital updated information on bus arrivals that is more accurate. I'm continuing my message. It would seem that the scrolls don't have accurate information so if we attain that level of technology. So there's really no excuse and so I recommend that. In addition we have live folks answering the phone until 6:00 Monday to Friday but nothing in the evening and nothing in the weekends holidays and I think it's time to invest a little more money in personnel cost so we can do that we can extend those hours and you know again we're trying to encourage folks to take the bus and we wanna give them the information they need in order to facilitate that encourage, and accommodate that. So those are my recommendation as far as personnel is concerned. There are a lot of bus shelters scattered around the state, most of them don't have information as to when the one or two buses are going by those particular bus shelters. We need the time now to put those scrolls in especially the high volume bus shelters. So people have that updated information. Route specific, Rt. 10, expressway. Only two busses take that, one is Rt 21, the other is Rt 30. There's a wide shoulder after the the Dean Street exist, before the downtown exit, that with some paint, could become a bus only lane in the far right. They could then continue going straight and take the downtown exit instead of the Dean St exit. There isn't a large number of busses taking that route, so it would be of minor impact. I'll pay for the paint.

Busses - we have all of these announcements on the busses, but most of the time they are far too loud.

I am absolutely fundamentally against any thoughts of demolishing the rail bridge that connects the Providence to East Providence. I don't care whether it's the State or the City's bridge, that bridge needs to remain in tact. Those of us who would hope that someday Providence and Newport and the State would recognize it. Connecting downtown Providence and Downtown Newport by rail would be such an economic generator, it would be a no-brainer and we should do that starting tomorrow. Most of the rail right of way is there and they're only missing a handful of miles in Bristol which can be accommodated. We need that bridge remain alive and well and healthy.



**Response to I-77-1**

Thank you for your comments regarding the FFY 2022-2031 STIP.

Regarding TIPID 5204, the project seeks to improve the existing system for current riders and create opportunities for future expansion of ridership, connect businesses and aid in the continued growth and service of Providence's neighborhoods. Kennedy Plaza will be maintained as a key station within the Multi Hub concept and the TMP calls for East-West as well as North-South high capacity transit service that will connect multiple hubs in downtown Providence with surrounding areas and neighborhoods. The TMP emphasized the utility of mobility hubs throughout the state to connect high capacity transit and work on the Multi Hub project is being coordinated between RIDOT, RIPTA, and the City of Providence.

The recent fire has clearly demonstrated that safety of emergency responders, boaters below and of the illegal trespassers has to be our first and foremost concern with a structure that is over 110 years old. The City of Providence has solicited for design concepts that would convert the bridge into a focal point and pedestrian facility. RIDOT is supportive of transferring the ownership to the City for their future plans.

**A-1: University of Rhode Island,**

**City:** Kingston

**Submit Date:** 07/12/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment A-1-1**

Plains Road Pavement Management

The Plains Road Pavement Management Project involves design and construction of a 0.7 miles of Plains Road from Route 138 to West Alumni Avenue in South Kingstown, Rhode Island. This project involves subsurface repair and resurfacing, stormwater improvements, signage and striping. Plains Road is severely rutted and requires a full depth reclamation in addition to a new wearing surface. The project will tie into RIDOT's planned improvements to the intersection of Route 138/Plains Road, serving as a gateway into URI's campus. This corridor is also critically important to support RIPTA's planned Mobility Hub at URI's Plains Road parking lot.

The request for the Plains Road Pavement Management project is for design and construction, a total of \$2,100,000 (\$100,000 for design and construction management, and \$2,000,000 for construction).

**Response to A-1-1**

Due to significant funding limitations the Division of Statewide Planning is not currently extending a solicitation for new projects to enter the FFY 2022-2031 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Due to these funding limitations we do not anticipate a call for

new projects to occur until at least 2022 and still subject to funding availability. When an open solicitation does occur, the Division of Statewide Planning will provide notification to all Rhode Island municipalities and stakeholders to submit projects applications for the STIP. Detail guidance on how to submit a project application will also be provided at that time. This is when it would be appropriate for URI to submit new projects for consideration in the STIP.

## **A-2: University of Rhode Island,**

**City:** Kingston

**Submit Date:** 07/12/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

### **Comment A-2-1**

Flagg Road Reconstruction

The Flagg Road Reconstruction Project involves design and construction of a 0.9 miles of Flagg Road from Plains Road to Old North Road in South Kingstown, Rhode Island. This project involves subsurface repair and resurfacing, stormwater improvements, signage and striping, bike lanes, wayfinding, and limited lighting. Flagg Road is severely rutted and requires a full depth reclamation in addition to a new wearing surface. This project is critical to move traffic around the core of campus as an integral part of our ring road system. It also helps to link the new URI Bike Path to the upper part of campus (Upper College Road and Old North Road) as both a bicycle and transit route.

The request for the Flagg Road Reconstruction project is for design and construction, a total of \$2,800,000 (\$200,000 for design and construction management, and \$2,600,000 for construction).

### **Response to A-2-1**

Due to significant funding limitations the Division of Statewide Planning is not currently extending a solicitation for new projects to enter the FFY 2022-2031 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Due to these funding limitations we do not anticipate a call for new projects to occur until at least 2022 and still subject to funding availability. When an open solicitation does occur, the Division of Statewide Planning will provide notification to all Rhode Island municipalities and stakeholders to submit projects applications for the STIP. Detail guidance on how to submit a project application will also be provided at that time. This is when it would be appropriate for URI to submit new projects for consideration in the STIP.

## **A-3: University of Rhode Island,**

**City:** Kingston

**Submit Date:** 07/12/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment A-3-1**

## Upper College Road Reconstruction, Phase 2

The Upper College Road Complete Street Reconstruction Project is split into two projects. The first project (Phase 1) is currently under construction with limits between Rt. 138 to the south to Ranger Road at the northerly terminus. The second project (Phase 2) is fully designed and permitted with limits between Ranger Road to the south to Flagg Road at the northerly terminus. The current Phase 1 project includes a temporary resurfacing of the northern section roadway (from Ranger Road north to Flagg Road) to replace damaged pavement surface until funding is approved for Phase 2 at a later date. The scope for both the Phase 1 and 2 projects includes a Complete Streets renovation of the entire corridor with new ADA accessible sidewalks, granite curbing, lighting, wayfinding signage, speed tables and dedicated bicycle lanes.

The request for Upper College Road Reconstruction, Phase 2 is for construction work only (design and permitting is complete) in the total amount of \$2,500,000 (\$50,000 for construction administration, \$2,450,000 for construction).

**Response to A-3-1**

Due to significant funding limitations the Division of Statewide Planning is not currently extending a solicitation for new projects to enter the FFY 2022-2031 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Due to these funding limitations we do not anticipate a call for new projects to occur until at least 2022 and still subject to funding availability. When an open solicitation does occur, the Division of Statewide Planning will provide notification to all Rhode Island municipalities and stakeholders to submit projects applications for the STIP. Detail guidance on how to submit a project application will also be provided at that time. This is when it would be appropriate for URI to submit new projects for consideration in the STIP.

**A-4: University of Rhode Island,**

**City:** Kingston

**Submit Date:** 07/12/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment A-4-1**

## Rt. 138 Reconstruction, Contract 1

The Rt. 138 Reconstruction Project, Phase 1 involves design and construction of a majority of the frontage of the University in Kingston, Rhode Island. This project involves the reconstruction of the roadway, new sidewalks, handicap ramp installation as well as needed bicycle and pedestrian safety enhancements. There are currently plans for significant utility work along this corridor with non-RIDOT funds, as well as planned traffic safety (traffic signal) improvements at University owned entrances that are scheduled for implementation over the next two years. The University requests that RIDOT assist in the coordination of these projects

so that we can seamlessly integrate the utility, pedestrian enhancement, and asset management objectives under one program. This collaboration will result in a more cost-efficient project with less disruption to the community.

The request for the Rt. 138 Reconstruction, Contract 1 project is for design and construction in the total amount of \$10,420,000.

**Response to A-4-1**

Due to significant funding limitations the Division of Statewide Planning is not currently extending a solicitation for new projects to enter the FFY 2022-2031 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). However, this project is already present in the STIP under TIPID 1399. RIDOT is already communicating and coordinating with the Town of South Kingstown to execute this project.

**M-1: Town of Smithfield,**

**City:** Smithfield

**Submit Date:** 06/10/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment M-1-1**

Consider TIP projects included in Town of Smithfield submission from 2017. Thank you for the updated inclusion in the draft 2022 TIP, some of which the Town now sees are included in the new TIP and some of which are not.

Please reconsider the following which are not included in the draft TIP:

Consider sidewalk improvements, minimum one side of road on RIDOT State portion of Esmond Street, between RIDOT US Route 44 (Putnam Pike) and RIDOT Dean Avenue/Old County Road.

**Response to M-1-1**

The Esmond Street Sidewalk project was submitted by the Town of Smithfield in 2017 for programming in the STIP. The project would construct new sidewalks along Esmond Street between Dean Avenue and Route 44, Putnam Pike. Project would entail the construction of approximately 2,000-ft of new pre-cast concrete curb, poured in place concrete sidewalks and minor drainage modifications to existing highway drainage. There is currently no local funding identified for this project.

The project was not included in the FFY 2017-2025 STIP nor the draft FFY 2022-2031 STIP due to funding constraints. We encourage you to resubmit this project the next time the State issues a solicitation for new projects to the STIP, which is estimated to be in about 2 years. In the meantime, we encourage the Town to advance any design work that could help to accelerate this project if it is selected for funding as part of the next solicitation.

**M-2: Narragansett,**

**City:** Narragansett

**Submit Date:** 06/10/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment M-2-1**

I would like to request that project id# 1361 be moved up the list as much as possible as is the road is in such bad condition and is a major artery to Ocean Rd. (1A). Project #5375 is a safety concern because there was a death at that location about 5 yrs. ago so if that could be moved up the list we would also appreciate it. Item # 5089 would be good to reduce pedestrian and bicycle traffic to Ocean Rd and the beach due to the high volumes of vehicle traffic on the main roads to the ocean. That being said could help to justify it as a public safety improvement.

We are excited to work with you,

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely

Stephen L Daignault Jr.

Deputy Director

Narragansett Public Works.

**Response to M-2-1**

Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) has enthusiastically supported the efforts by U.S. Rep. Jim Langevin to secure Member-Designated Projects to advance construction of South Pier Road in Narragansett, RI, as part of the federal highway bill making its way through Congress. The project will include full-depth pavement reconstruction, sidewalk replacement, handicap ramp installation, drainage enhancements, and potentially modest widening along South Pier Road in the Town of Narragansett. South Pier Road is one of just two key arterial roads linking US-1 to Narragansett's town center and beach. Serving thousands of drivers and pedestrians every day, the area has a history of safety and drainage issues, exacerbated by the deteriorating condition of the road. Repairing this critical roadway will improve safety for local residents, bring an essential east-west connector up to a state of good repair, improve stormwater facilities, and address the top transportation priority for the Town of Narragansett. RIDOT sees the infrastructure investments being discussed on the federal level are a window of opportunity to finally build this popular and vital link.

2022 Intersection & Crosswalks: East/South [STIP ID 5375] includes crosswalks, wheelchair ramps, pedestrian crossing devices, left turn lanes, and other work to improve intersections and crosswalks for the East and South regions of the state. Funding for this project is programmed for 2022, the earliest year of the STIP. RIDOT recognizes the safety concerns associated with this project and but will not be able to make funding available prior to FFY 2022, which begins October 1, 2021.

William C. O'Neill Bike Path Extension - Phase 4B [STIP ID 5089] is programmed to receive a total of \$3M beginning in 2025. This project will design and construct the final segment of the William C. O'Neill (South County Bike Path) to Narragansett Town Beach. The construction of

this extension is pending an agreement of an alternative route with the town of Narragansett. Funding for this project will not be available until FFY 2025, which begins October 1, 2024.

### **M-3: Providence,**

**City:** Providence

**Submit Date:** 06/11/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

#### **Comment M-3-1**

It appears that funds for the WRG project (STIP ID 5178) have been moved out to 2023 and 2024. This construction project will be constructed in Summer 2022-Spring 2023, so we need to ensure funds will be available for City reimbursement within that timeframe. I am concerned about the funds being pushed so far out. We expect to have the construction contract signed and funds committed by mid-Summer 2022.

Providence's City Walk project that was in the previous STIP does not appear in the new STIP. We expect to have the construction contract for that work signed and funds committed prior to September 2021, so I would like to ensure that those funds have not disappeared and are still being made available to the City or Providence for reimbursement.

Why is STIP ID 3221 (Veazie bridge project) listed as an Active Transportation Project? This is a road bridge replacement that does not involve any active transportation upgrades that I am aware of.

How will allocation of the \$2.65M listed under STIP ID 1491 (Green Economy bond funds) work? Is there a call for projects or evaluation matrix available to explain where these funds will go?

STIP ID 5202 (Providence Waterplace and Riverwalk Repairs and Walkway Improvements) appears to have been pushed out to 2030, when it was previously programmed much earlier in previous iterations of the STIP. No one spoke to the City of Providence about this shift and we need the funds much earlier, beginning in 2023-24.

We would like to have STIP ID 5215 (Washington Secondary Bike Path Extension) moved up to a sooner year. 2025-26 is quite a far way away and this regional bike path connection between the Washington and Woonasquatucket is needed much sooner than that.

Why are the Roger Williams Park bridges (9996) listed as an active transportation project? These are roadway bridge replacements without any significant active transportation components that I am aware of.

### **Response to M-3-1**

Thank you for your comments regarding the FFY 2022-2031 STIP.

Regarding TIPID 5178, thank you for bringing this matter to our attention. The Federal Fiscal Year 2023 begins on October 1, 2022. The \$2M identified in 2023 in the FFY 2022-2031 STIP should be available to reimburse late-2022 expenses. The funding currently programmed for 2024 will be shifted to 2023 to accommodate the project's schedule.

For TIPID 5183, the CityWalk project, the FFY 2018-2027 STIP allocated \$1.83M in funding to this project during FFY 2020. This project was already authorized for its full amount at that time. The project does not need to appear in the new FFY 2022-2031 STIP.

Like the Transportation Alternatives Program before it, the ATP is home to all subrecipient projects in the STIP. Because the Veazie Street Bridge is owned by the City of Providence, RIDOT will provide for funding for the construction of the project, but the City will execute on a reimbursement basis. The bridge supports two-sided sidewalks that provide pedestrian access over the West River. As a historic structure, its repair is classified as a "community improvement activity" and eligible Transportation Alternatives project under 23 U.S.C 133(h)(3), which includes "historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities".

As the description of TIPID 1492, GEB Bicycle Improvements Contingency Account States,, funding "is to be held in contingency and utilized to further advance construction of the State's bicycle network as needed and determined through standard TIP adoption and amendment procedures." There will not be a call for new projects, rather, this line item will be used in accordance with STIP procedures to provide contingency funding for bicycle improvements throughout the state as needed. In consultation with the Department of Transportation and the Division of Statewide Planning, the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) will determine which projects receive funding set aside under this line item.

Regarding TIPID 5202, funding for this project was shifted to 2030 to allow the changes to Waterplace Park and the Riverwalk that are set forth under the "Imagine Providence" initiative to develop. The proposal makes mention of replacing the existing Riverwalk with an elevated platform to better protect against sea level rise, work which may conflict with repairs to the existing Riverwalk described in TIPID 5202.

The Washington Secondary Bike Path Extension project is scheduled to begin immediately following the completion of the 6/10 Project, which includes construction of a shared-use-path component immediately north of the limits of TIPID 5215.

TIPID 9996, the Roger Williams Park Zoo Bridges Project repairs five historic stone bridges within Roger Williams Park and Zoo. All structures support access to the recreational facilities contained within the park and have pedestrian sidewalks on both sides of the roadway. Bridges #885 and #886 also support bike lanes on both shoulders. These paths provide pedestrians and cyclists with access to the park, the surrounding neighborhoods, and the Roger Williams Park Botanical Center.

The FFY 2022-2031 STIP is fiscally constrained. If additional federal funding is made available,

there may be an opportunity to accelerate certain projects or increase investment in active transportation and climate-change-mitigation activities.

**M-4: Bonnie Nickerson**

**City:** Providence

**Submit Date:** 07/06/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment M-4-1**

I am writing to express concern regarding the proposed State Transportation Improvement Plan and its impact on projects in Providence.

The proposed STIP shows construction funds for the Woonasquatucket River Greenway project (WRG - STIP ID 5178) being shifted from its current allocation in FFY 2022 and 2023 out to 2023 and 2024. This change would cause a significant delay to the project, which we plan to have under construction in June of 2022. We have worked closely with RIDOT, WRWC, and community members on this project, and we are disappointed in both this proposed delay and in the lack of communication from RIDOT to the city regarding this issue. I respectfully request that the WRG- STIP ID 5178 project funds be adjusted back to the original allocation timeline of FFYs 2022 and 2023.

STIP ID 5202 (Providence Waterplace and Riverwalk Repairs and Walkway Improvements) appears to have been pushed out to 2030. This project had been previously programmed much earlier in previous iterations of the STIP. The City of Providence was not consulted on this shift and will require the funds much earlier, beginning in 2023-24, in order to make needed improvements related to ADA access, flood mitigation, structural damage, and public safety to the City's Riverwalk.

We also respectfully request to have STIP ID 5215 (Washington Secondary Bike Path Extension) moved up on the timeline. FFYs 2025-26 is too long of a delay and this regional bike path connection between the Washington and Woonasquatucket is needed much sooner than that.

Additionally, I join with other colleagues from around the state to emphasize that the current overall allocation to active transportation projects in the STIP is simply not sufficient. With unprecedented challenges related to climate change, public health, and racial inequity, the state must do more to fund active transportation projects in Providence and around Rhode Island as a matter of equity and access for all.

**Response to M-4-1**

Thank you for your comments regarding the FFY 2022-2031 STIP.



Regarding TIPID 5178, the Federal Fiscal Year 2023 begins on October 1, 2022. The \$2M identified in 2023 in the FFY 2022-2031 STIP should be available to reimburse late-2022 expenses. The funding currently programmed for 2024 will be shifted to 2023 to accommodate the project's schedule.

Regarding TIPID 5202, funding for this project was shifted to 2030 to allow the changes to Waterplace Park and the Riverwalk that are set forth under the "Imagine Providence" initiative to develop. The proposal makes mention of replacing the existing Riverwalk with an elevated platform to better protect against Sea Level Rise, work which may conflict with the proposed repairs to the existing Riverwalk described in TIP ID 5202.

The FFY 2022-2031 STIP is fiscally constrained. If additional federal funding is made available, there may be an opportunity to accelerate certain projects or increase investment in active transportation and climate-change-mitigation activities.

### **M-5: Town of Portsmouth,**

**City:** Portsmouth

**Submit Date:** 07/08/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

#### **Comment M-5-1**

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments on the proposed Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2022- 2031 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for the State of Rhode Island. The following are summations of Portsmouth Town Councilor Keith Hamilton 's verbal comments provided June 29<sup>th</sup> at the STIP Public Hearing held at the Narragansett Town Hall. I completely agree with his comments.

There are 10 projects in the STIP within the Town of Portsmouth and we are requesting adjustment to some of the scope and certainly the timing of the projects listed below. Projects are listed in order of importance for safety of not only the citizens of Portsmouth, but also all those who utilize State Roads 138 and 114 as gateways to Newport.

STIP ID #1377 - Sprague Street Resurfacing and Sidewalks (East Main Road to Bristol Ferry Road). This project encompasses what were formerly two separate projects which have been combined into one. The resurfacing of Sprague Street was listed as a high priority by the Town of Portsmouth in the 2017- 2021 round of STIP inputs and was scheduled to be constructed in 2022-23. The sidewalk construction has been on the STIP from at least 2013 and was listed as high priority and scheduled for construction 2017-18. It did not happen. The roadway is a main connector from East Main Road (138) and West Main Road (114) and is substantially deteriorated. Sprague Street is also the main walking path for Portsmouth High School students. It is also a high use path used by people transiting to the local grocery center; including wheelchair bound people who are able to travel safely on East Main, Bristol Ferry and Turnpike via sidewalks but are forced into traffic on Sprague. The 2022-

2031 STIP proposal moves this project from 2022-2024 to 2028-2031. We respectfully request this project remain in its current timeframe and be completed by 2023.

STIP ID #1380 - Rte. 138, East Main Road (Hedly Street to Middletown T/L) Resurfacing of Roadway. I respectfully submit this project is quite overdue. The roadway has more pothole patch than original pavement. We believe this project should be married with STIP ID #9004 Shared Use Path and STIP ID #5377 Crosswalk and Intersection Improvements at McCorrie. We see no reason for these projects to be done at separate times. Resurfacing of 138 was scheduled for 2022 and we request that schedule be kept. With regard to STIP ID #9004, we are not in favor of any shared use path that narrows or removes a lane of traffic. East Main Road is already too narrow and really needs to be widened. We respectfully request these three projects be added to the construction schedule for 2021-2022.

STIP ID #1360 - Rte. 114, West Main Road (John Kesson to Mill Lane). We agree this project needs to be done as soon as possible but should end at Locust Street, vice Mill Lane, as this portion was paved in the 2018-2019 timeframe. We would like to see upgrades to the 114 - Union/Redwood intersection to include turning lanes in both the north and south bound lanes. This intersection is a highly traveled area in the morning and afternoon as it is the primary route to the Portsmouth Middle School and serves as the main artery for traffic to the Newport Naval Station.

We concur with the remaining projects and timelines and appreciate the attention to these areas. Thank you for your attention to these projects.

**Response to M-5-1**

Thank you for your comments on the Draft FFY 2022-2031 STIP.

There are three resurfacing projects along East Main Road in Middletown and Portsmouth. These projects have been programmed in the FFY 2022-2031 STIP to be constructed in sequence with one another. TIPID 1380 is scheduled to commence construction first in 2023, but this timeline may be accelerated. New funding could be made available from the American Rescue Plan under RIDOT's proposed "Smooth Rhodes" program, pending state approval.

In regards to the McCorrie Lane signal improvements and TIPID 1380, RIDOT is aware of the opportunity to bundle this safety improvement with roadway resurfacing, and will monitor the status and scope of the project to determine compatibility.

The timeline for TIPID 1377 (Sprague Street) may be advanced, and discussions between RIDOT and the Town of Portsmouth are ongoing.

We appreciate you bringing the recent resurfacing of a section of West Main Road to our attention. The limits of roadway resurfacing for TIPID 1360 will be reduced back to Locust Avenue from Mill Lane.

## **M-6: Portsmouth Town Council,**

**City:** Portsmouth

**Submit Date:** 07/09/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

### **Comment M-6-1**

I want to thank you all for taking the time to listen to my comments and concerns during the June 29<sup>th</sup> Public Hearing at the Narragansett Town Hall. The following are summations of my verbal comments for you and also the members who were unable to attend the public hearing. The State has 10 projects in the TIP within the Town of Portsmouth and we are requesting adjustment to some of the scope and certainly the timing of the projects listed and I will expand on all below. Projects are listed in the importance for safety of not only the citizens of Portsmouth but also all those that utilize routes 138 & 114 as the gateways to Newport.

STIP ID #1377, Sprague Street Resurfacing and Sidewalks (East Main Road to Bristol Ferry Road). This project encompasses what were formally 2 separate projects that have now been combined into one. The resurfacing of Sprague Street was listed as a high priority by the Town of Portsmouth in the 2017-2021 round of TIP and scheduled to be constructed in 2022-23. The sidewalk construction has been on the TIP from at least 2013 and listed as high priority and scheduled for construction 2017-18 and did not happen. The roadway is a main connector from East Main Road(138) and West Main Road(114) and has been deteriorating steadily over the years and only getting worse. Sprague Street is also the main walking path for students who walk to school at Portsmouth High. It is also a very heavily traveled path for people to get to shopping , including wheelchair bound people who are able to travel safely on East Main, Bristol Ferry and Turnpike on Sidewalks but are forced into traffic on Sprague. The 2022-2031 tip moves this project from 2022-2024 to 2028-2031. We respectfully request this project remain in its current timeframe and be completed by 2023.

STIP ID 1380. Rte. 138 East Main Road(Hedley St. to Middletown T/L) Resurfacing of Roadway. This is a project that is at least 20 years overdue. The roadway appears to have more pothole patch than original pavement. We believe this project should be married with STIP ID#9004 Shared use path and STIP ID #5377 Crosswalk and Intersection improvements at McCorrie. There also should be upgrades of the intersections at Sandy Point Ave with the addition of a left turn lane on the South bound side heading into Sandy Point Ave and also a left turn lane heading North onto Union Street. We see no reason for these projects to be done at separate times. The 2013-2016 had the resurfacing of 138 scheduled for 2022 and we would like that schedule kept. With regards to Project 9004 we would not be in favor of any shared use path that narrows or removes a lane of traffic. East Main Road is already too narrow and really needs to be widened. There is also a new traffic signal on the construction schedule in the near future at the intersection of Linden Lane and Rte. 138. We respectfully request these 4 projects be added to the construction schedule for 2021-2022.

STIP ID #1360. Rte. 114, West Main Road (John Kesson to Mill Lane). We agree this project needs to be done ASAP but should end at Locust not Mill Lane as this portion was paved in 2018-2019 timeframe. We would like to see major upgrades to the 114 Union/Redwood intersection to include turning lanes in both the north and south bound lanes. This intersection is a highly traveled area in the morning and afternoon as it is the main entrance for our Middle School and serves as the main artery for traffic into the Navy Base.

All of the other projects and timelines we are in agreement with and appreciate the attention to these areas. We are in great need for the improvements listed 1377 and 1380. We have had numerous accidents and pedestrian incidents on both of these roadways that clearly warrant upgrades as soon as possible. Thank you for your attention with these projects.

Best regards, Keith Hamilton  
Portsmouth Town Council

**Response to M-6-1**

Thank you for attending the June 29th Public Hearing and providing your comments on the Draft FFY 2022-2031 STIP. They are greatly appreciated.

Regarding STIPID 1377, RIDOT will be discussing this project with the Town of Portsmouth. The State is aware of the key role that this roadway plays in providing a safe means of access for Portsmouth High School. The authorization of American Rescue Plan (ARP) funding for RIDOT's Smooth Rhodes initiative may allow for this project to be accelerated.

The state agrees that a resurfacing of East Main Road is long overdue. RIDOT has included this project on a list of projects to be funded by the aforementioned Smooth Rhodes Program, a request for \$150 million in support from the American Recovery Plan funds made available to the state. If the RI General Assembly votes to make Smooth Rhodes funding available to RIDOT, then this project may be accelerated, along with dozens of other pavement projects around the state.

We also appreciate you bringing the intersection of East Main Road and McCorrie Lane to our attention as a potential bundle candidate with this resurfacing. This recommendation will be discussed with RIDOT's Traffic Safety team, along with an investigation of improvements to other intersections you mentioned. RIDOT and its partners performed a Road Safety Assessment (RSA) for East Main Road earlier this year, with one ongoing for West Main Road.

**M-7: Town of Gloucester,**

**City:** Chepachet

**Submit Date:** 07/09/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

#### **Comment M-7-1**

Thank you for the invitation to comment on the proposed Federal Fiscal Year 2022-2031 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). It was with great concern that the Town reviewed the scheduled change to a very important repaving project within the Town of Gloucester. Route 94, Reynolds Road (STIP ID 1329) from the Foster Town Line to US-44 was originally scheduled for repaving in 2019 and was delayed until 2022 with the adoption of the FFY 2018-2027 STIP. This project is currently shown in funding years 2022 ,À 2024 with a total project funding of \$7.3 million in the FFY 2018-2027 STIP. The draft FFY 2022-2031 STIP proposes to delay this project even further to FFY 2024-2027 with a total project budget of \$6.4 million. The scheduling delay and decreased project budget are unacceptable.

This segment of Route 94 has been a continuous issue for the Town. Since 2015, the Gloucester Police Department has investigated approximately 53 motor vehicle accidents, including one (1) fatality and several others resulting in serious bodily injury. The deteriorated surface condition of the roadway has been a contributing factor in several of these incidents. The Gloucester Police have received numerous complaints from vehicle and motorcycle operators concerning the temporary repairs and surface condition, which has necessitated calls to RIDOT to repeatedly repair the temporary fixes. The Chief of the West Gloucester Fire District has also repeatedly expressed his concerns as to how the current conditions of the roadway pose specific hazards for first responders and emergency equipment.

In 2017, the Town participated in a Road Safety Assessment led by RIDOT on this segment of Reynolds Road as this location ranked in the top 50 locations ranked by crash history severity in the 2011-2015 analysis period. This assessment identified a series of immediate, near and long term potential improvements to implement along this corridor. RIDOT committed to move forward with the implementation of several of the recommended projects including resurfacing the approaches, applying a high friction surface treatment, intersection reconfiguration to provide better delineation around the horizontal curve, and guardrail and signing upgrades at the Route 94 and Killingly Road intersection and installing/upgrading guardrail and curve delineation signage on Route 94 at the reverse horizontal curves south of Killingly Road. In 2017, RIDOT also resurfaced a short stretch of Route 94 at the FM Research Campus entrance. While these incremental steps to improve the roadway have been welcome, we submit that a more holistic approach, coordinating the safety improvements and the roadway improvements, is a much more efficient use of resources.

In addition, this road serves as the primary access point to the Town's largest employer, FM Global, which employs several hundred people at their Research Campus. This 1,600 acre campus is one of the most innovative research and testing centers in the world for property loss prevention scientific research and product testing. At this facility, FM Global helps many of the world's largest companies understand how to prevent potentially catastrophic physical threats from affecting their properties and business operations. To that end, the Campus hosts several thousand worldwide visitors each year.

This project will not only assist in solving the widely acknowledged safety issues that exist along the corridor but also better facilitate the movement of thousands of employees and visitors to one of the State's economic development success stories, FM Global.

The Town has three (3) additional pavement management projects in the FFY 2018-2027 STIP, all of which are delayed significantly in the draft FFY 2022-2031 STIP:

1. TIP ID 1304 Reservoir Road (US-44 to South Main Street) is projected for funding in FFY 2025 in the current STIP and is proposed for delay until 2031.
2. TIP ID 9549 US-44, Putnam Pike (Sprague Hill Road to CT S/L) is projected for funding in FFY 2026 in the current STIP and is proposed for delay until 2029.
3. TIP ID 9547 US-44 Putnam Pike (Reservoir Road to Money Hill Road) is projected for funding in FFY 2027 in the current STIP and is proposed for delay until 2031.

Proposing delays to every pavement management project scheduled in the Town of Gloucester is unacceptable. We urge the Transportation Advisory Committee and the State Planning Council to reject all efforts to further delay these much needed improvements on Reynolds Road, Reservoir Road and US-44.

Thank you for your consideration.

**Response to M-7-1**

Thank you for your thoughtful comments. STIP ID 1329, Route 94/Reynolds Road, is a key priority for RIDOT for all the reasons you mentioned. That is why the department included it on a list of projects to be funded by the Smooth Rhodes Program, a request for \$150 million in support from the American Recovery Plan funds made available to the state. If the General Assembly votes to make Smooth Rhodes funding available to RIDOT, then this project may be accelerated, along with dozens of other pavement projects around the state.

Regarding STIP IDs 1304, 9549, and 9547, RIDOT will revisit the timing of those projects and coordinate with the Town of Gloucester to develop revised schedules.

**M-8: North Kingstown,**

**City:** North Kingstown

**Submit Date:** 07/12/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment M-8-1**

The Town of North Kingstown has taken the opportunity to review the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for 2022-2031. The Town of North Kingstown would like to offer the following comments on a few of the projects included in the program. The first set of comments are related to the following projects that have been included in the program

however they have been scheduled further out for future years than the 2018-2027 TIP as amended had scheduled them.

5120 - Post Road and W. Main Street Curbing and Sidewalks. The Town of North Kingstown has had extensive discussions with the RIDOT regarding this critical project and we would like to continue to work with the RIDOT on bringing this project to fruition. This has been a project of significant importance to the town for several years. The project took on even more importance with the completion of the sewer installation in the southern segment of the Post Road corridor and down West Main Street into Wickford village. The town would like a commitment from the state to begin this project in 2022/2023. This project has been pledged to North Kingstown for several years and was previously slated for 2019. Scheduling this project further out into future years again is not acceptable. While we are optimistic to see that the curbing and sidewalks on Post Road and West Main Street remain in the STIP, we continue to believe that we missed an opportunity to complete the sidewalk and curbing once the sewer installation was completed. Given the proposed delay in the start time of the project, first until 2022 and now as shown in the 2022-2031 STIP for funding year 2023, the town is concerned that the project is losing momentum and not being prioritized in a manner that reflects the project's importance.

As you are aware, there have been several efforts over the years to revive the Post Road corridor including redesign of the roadway, creation of the Post Road zoning district and Facade Improvement Program, sewer installation and designation of the corridor as a growth center in our comprehensive plan re-write. The town has also been working with the RIDOT for several years on the West Main Street portion of this project. In addition to the sewer installation, the town has also been looking at improving connectivity in the village, particularly for non-motorized transportation. The installation and replacement of sidewalks along West Main Street will help to achieve that goal and enhance the overall connectivity within the village. The town has also been addressing coastal resiliency in the village and the drainage improvements along West Main Street will help in that effort. We are concerned with the description of this project in the STIP that drainage "may" be included in the project for West Main Street. This has been a much-needed component of the project that is of critical importance to the town and the town would like to some assurance that drainage will be addressed .

As part of previous TIP amendments, we have forwarded our concerns with delaying the project into future years. While many of the issues have already been discussed with the RIDOT, we feel it is worthwhile to reiterate those concerns again here. First, Post Road has been in the study and design portion of the TIP since at least the 1990s. Earlier references to assessing this corridor for improvements through inclusion in the TIP date back even farther to the early 1980s. The town has made a major investment in the corridor with the installation of sewers in the southern portion of Post Road (from Route 403 south to the state police barracks) and into Wickford . The town has also worked with the RIDOT to reconfigure the striping of the roadway of the Post Road Corridor south segment which included the reduction in lanes from four to two travel lanes with a shared

turning lane. Further, the Town Council passed a complete streets resolution on March 26, 2012 to demonstrate the town's commitment to the complete streets approach. The redesign of the roadway incorporates the complete streets concepts and takes advantage of the opportunity to provide a safer, more aesthetic multi-modal roadway. The installation of the sidewalks along the corridor and into the village would provide the much-needed pedestrian aspect of a complete street.

Consistent with Land Use 2025, the town rezoned the entire Post Road Corridor to make it a major hub for future growth in the form of very high-density mixed-use development and has been designated as a growth center in our comprehensive plan. As such, the corridor has seen a rapid growth in residential housing. Sidewalks will provide a much safer and attractive connector for these new and existing residents to the businesses located along the corridor. Infrastructure improvements such as sidewalks are necessary to spur future development in this area, and to discourage growth outside of the USB, consistent with the state guide plan.

3223 - Wickford Village Sidewalks and Resiliency (Including) Previously 5125 - Belleville House to Wickford sidewalks. This collection of projects is now scheduled to being in 2028, several years later than the previous STIP had anticipated. While we understand funding limits and are prioritizing the completion of 5120 noted *above*, we hope that these projects do not keep getting delayed in future STIP amendments.

The previous STIP included a project 5125 which included the installation of sidewalks from the Belleville House to Wickford along Tower Hill Road and Phillips Street. Our initial review of the STIP raised a concern that the 2022-2031 STIP did not appear to include the sidewalks between the intersection of Ten Rod Road and Tower Hill Road extending east down Phillips Street and south to the Belleville House. Based upon recent discussions, it is our understanding that this project 5125 was grouped into project 3223 in the 2022-2031 STIP. It is also our understanding that the project includes sidewalks as well as the paving noted in 3223 even though the sidewalks are not specifically listed and further that the sidewalks are not just on Phillips Street but also along Tower Hill Road extending to the Belleville House. The town will like confirmation that this accurately describes what is included as a line item for project 3223.

Post Road Drainage - 5128 - It is our understanding that the improvements associated with this project have begun in the vicinity of the intersection of Post and Essex Roads with the nearby lot clearing for a drainage structure. Given this recent activity, the town is curious as to why the timeline for this project now has a start time of 2022 and extends to 2024. Are there other improvements proposed?

5378 - 2024 Intersection & Crosswalks - The town is looking for additional detail on this line item. Does project 5378 refer to the potential roundabout at the intersection of Brown and Phillips Streets? Are there improvements proposed for the intersection of West Main and Brown Streets as well? What improvements are proposed for this intersection?



The Town of North Kingstown's comprehensive plan land use element has a goal of encouraging focused growth in sustainable patterns consistent with Land Use 2025 and the above-noted projects play an important role in accomplishing that goal. These necessary public infrastructure improvements will support these growth patterns and assist the town in meeting future development needs. We hope that this clarifies some of the issues related to these important projects.

### **Response to M-8-1**

Thank you for your comments on the draft FFY22-31 STIP.

RIDOT will continue to discuss and coordinate with the Town as to the timing of the project and availability of funding for TIPID 5120, Post and West Main Rd - Curbing and Sidewalks.

The scopes of some projects in the Wickford Village area have been altered following the installation of a sanitary sewer and the roadway resurfacing that followed. This includes the section of West Main Road previously covered under TIPID 1368 in the old FFY18-27 STIP, which has been scoped back to sidewalk improvements with possible drainage improvement and bundled with TIPID 5120. The state is aware of the hazard that sea-level rise and storm surge poses to routes along Wickford Cove, and is happy to collaborate with the town to ensure that drainage improvements and other forms of mitigation are factored into future investments.

If Rhode Island were to receive additional funding, it may allow for the acceleration of some projects. This applies to TIPID 3223, Wickford Village Sidewalk and Resiliency Enhancements. This project is a bundle of several portions of other projects. It bundles together TIPID 5125, which entailed new sidewalk construction along RI-102S towards Wickford Village, with the resurfacing and sidewalk replacement of RI-102 and the sidewalks in the northbound lane that access Wickford Middle School and the town library. The absence of the sidewalk assets for those sections in the STIP table was the result of a mapping error, which has since been remediated. These assets, identified as SDW\_10035 (which reflects the Belleville House sidewalk), SDW\_10036, AND SDW\_10037, are now visible in the public dashboard and will appear in the final STIP table.

Regarding TIPID 5128, the programmed funds for this Stormwater project reflect the continued construction of the improvement rather than a delayed start date. As observed, work is already underway.

Finally, TIPID 5378 reflects multiple workzones in need of intersection safety improvements for 2024 work across the state, but there are two sites in the Wickford Village area that will be addressed. First, the "Downtown Wickford" asset (ID# HSIP\_101) reflects the proposed roundabout improvements where RI-102 meets Brown Street and Boston Neck Road. Second, "Tower Hill Road at Route 102" (ID# HSIP\_2245) will add a turn lane for US-1 South at the intersection to alleviate congestion. At this time there are no mapped or planned improvements for the intersection of Brown and West Main, but this may be discussed further.

## **M-9: Pawtucket,**

**City:** Foster

**Submit Date:** 07/12/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

### **Comment M-9-1**

The City of Pawtucket appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed 2022-2031 Draft STIP. We are pleased to see the number of critical projects that are being recommended for funding in the Draft STIP, especially the investment in the new Pawtucket Central Falls Transit Hub, the Blackstone River Bike Path and the repair of the bridges and roadways in Pawtucket.

The City would like to request, however, that the following adjustments to the STIP be considered by the State Planning Council:

### **Barton Street Bridge**

The STIP recommends that the Barton Street Bridge be removed rather than renovated or replaced. The City strongly opposes removal of this bridge which serves as a critical connector for pedestrian and vehicular traffic in this section of Pawtucket and nearby Central Falls. The importance of retaining this connection will only increase with the opening of the Pawtucket Central Falls Transit Hub in 2022, which is located a few blocks away. Traffic is expected to increase following the opening of the Transit Hub and local streets will be overburdened without the link provided by the Barton Street Bridge. During the Section 106 Review, the Pawtucket HDC provided a letter in opposition to the removal of the Bridge, which was identified in the *Preliminary Structures Report* as the most impactful to historic resources. This letter and the report are attached.

### **Tidewater Multi-Modal Transportation Safety and Efficiency Assessment (MTSEA)**

The City has been working with RIDOT and the developers of the proposed Tidewater Landing Project, a \$300 million mixed use development anchored by a professional soccer stadium. The MTSEA, which is being prepared by RIDOT, identifies a number of traffic and safety improvements which are needed to accommodate the traffic and pedestrian activity anticipated to be generated by this project. The City requests that the MTSEA improvements be incorporated into the STIP.

### **Newport Avenue Corridor Study**

The STIP includes resurfacing of Newport Avenue. Newport Avenue serves an important economic development corridor for Pawtucket and East Providence. The City requests that the resurfacing proposal be expanded to include addressing drainage, signalization, pedestrian improvements and transit.

### **Response to M-9-1**

Thank you for your comments on the Draft FFY 2022-2031 STIP. We appreciate your support for the Pawtucket Central Falls Transit Hub, Blackstone River Bikeway Projects, and the state's ongoing commitment to keep bridges and roadways in state of good repair.

The Barton Street Bridge, included in Bridge Group 56D (TIPID 3075), has been closed to vehicular traffic since 2017, as noted in the report attached to your comment. Its state of structural deficiency is a hazard to motorists and the continued operation of trains on Amtrak's Northeast Corridor. Your comment regarding this bridge is noted.

Regarding the MTSEA, the City is encouraged to discuss the matter with RIDOT and the Division of Statewide Planning at a later date. Due to significant funding limitations the Division of Statewide Planning is not currently extending a solicitation for new projects to enter the FFY 2022-2031 STIP. Due to these funding limitations the State does not anticipate a call for new projects to occur until at least 2022 and still subject to funding availability. When an open solicitation does occur, the Division of Statewide Planning will provide notification to all Rhode Island municipalities and stakeholders to submit projects applications for the STIP. Detail guidance on how to submit a project application will also be provided at that time, and that point would be when the MTSEA may be applied for consideration.

Regarding TIPID 1375, RI-1A, Newport Avenue (Pawtucket Ave to Federal Street), we are happy to discuss this matter to determine if these proposed improvements would be suitable for bundling with resurfacing. Please note that a portion of this project, from Pawtucket Avenue to the East Providence Town Line, is located in the City of East Providence.

### **M-10: Town of Cumberland, RI,**

**City:** Cumberland

**Submit Date:** 07/12/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

#### **Comment M-10-1**

FFY 2022-2031 RI STIP Comments: Cumberland Public Works Department

1. Church Street Bridge (P&W RR Crossing/Bridge ID 094301): During a previous STIP review by this office in 2017 (at which time a prioritization listing was provided to RIDOT), the Church St (P&W RR) Bridge had been listed and given a high priority. Upon review of the Bridge Program listings provided in the draft FFY 2022-2031, this bridge, which is part of Bridge Group No. 24, did not appear. As this bridge is in need of superstructure rehabilitation, including painting, deck repairs, and any related structural repairs, we respectfully ask that this bridge again be given consideration for inclusion and prioritization under the present program.

2. Sneece Pond Road (Route 120 to End/Project ID 1319): The scope of work associated with this project is the pavement reclamation and repaving of this state-owned roadway from Route 120 (Nate Whipple Highway) to the eastern section of this roadway where it reconnects with Rt. 120. However, there are some drainage improvements that need to be further investigated

and given consideration by RIDOT as part of the scope of this project. As the easterly section beyond Anna Mac Dr. is served by off-road drainage into the wetland areas associated with the East Sneeck Brook on the northerly side and the wetland area on the southerly side, new paved waterways should be given consideration on the northerly side of the roadway, where stormwater ponding always occurs, in conjunction with the rehabilitation of the existing waterways that drain into the existing low-lying wetlands area on the southerly side. There is also a condition survey which could be given consideration in connection with the existing culvert bridge located west of Anna Mack Drive. Whereupon the roadway is rehabilitated and the latter improvements are further investigated and become part of the scope of work of this project, the town will give consideration to taking ownership of this roadway within these limits upon completion of same.

3. Route 122/Mendon Road (I-295 to Ann & Hope Way) ID 1318: Drainage improvements were requested at an earlier date by the town, and are included with the scope of work associated with this project. However, the section of roadway located south of the Burger King location, which is the focus of the drainage improvements, continues to hamper motorists during heavy storm events in conjunction with the further deterioration of the roadway along the easterly shoulder within this area between Burger King and Rt. 116. We respectfully request a further review of the prioritization of this project.

**Response to M-10-1**

Thank you for your comments and recommendations for the FFY 2022-2031 STIP.

Bridge #943, the Church Street Railroad Bridge, was removed from Bridge Group 24 as part of FFY 2022-2031 STIP because its needs are incompatible with those of other bridges programmed in the surrounding area. The structure may be repaired under an immediate action contract (TIPID 6999), if an inspection of the asset indicates that it requires immediate work. This structure will continue to be monitored by RIDOT and addressed if the need arises. In addition, RIDOT will evaluate the possibility of programming this bridge in the STIP in a future year.

Thank you for your recommendations regarding TIPID 1319 Sneeck Pond Road. Stormwater evaluations are a key component of the design phase for roadway projects, and we appreciate you bringing specific areas of concern to our attention in advance. RIDOT will coordinate a transfer of ownership with the town following completion of the project.

Regarding your concern on Route 122 Mendon Road, RIDOT has included TIPIDs and 1318 and 1319 it on a list of potential projects to be funded by the Smooth Rhodes Program, a request for \$150 million in support from the American Recovery Plan funds made available to the state. This initiative, if approved by the General Assembly, will allow for these roadways to be addressed on an accelerated timeline.

**M-11: Newport,**

**City:** Newport

**Submit Date:** 07/12/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

**Comment M-11-1**

The City of Newport has long had unique transportation needs. In recent years, we have been inundated with seasonal traffic interested in our oceanfront and historic and cultural resources. In the last decade, the City has worked with the State Planning Council and Department of Transportation to secure a transformative investment in our North End with the realignment of the Pell Bridge approaches. A groundbreaking will be held this Friday morning with the Governor and Congressional Delegation. This project was developed with decades of planning partnership between the City and State to create a second downtown area with year-round economic activity and we are now entering the implementation phase. It is critical that sufficient funding be provided to this project to complete it to the standard needed to attract this year-round activity. The soon-to-be-completed Phase One project has some deficiencies (i.e., crosswalks, signage, utility pole locations, street lights, tree trimming and landscaping) which the City would like to see avoided with Phase Two.

A second critical project for Newport and the State of Rhode Island is Bellevue Avenue. The City recently successfully requested this Council to reprogram desired enhancements to two other critical roadways, Spring Street and Thames Street, to Bellevue Avenue in order to provide much-needed maintenance to this internationally -renowned Rhode Island crown jewel. This concrete and stone dust thoroughfare has reached the end of its service life and visitors and residents to this historic asset are having poor experiences, negatively impacting our economy. A major overhaul is needed, not a \$5 million reduction in project scope.

The City of Newport respectfully requests that STIP projects in Newport be programmed to meet the intense use they receive and are designed and constructed to the high standards our international tourists expect in order to attract the revenues we all rely on. The City worked with the State to reconstruct Broadway, expanding our lively downtown in a very successful manner. We look forward to working with the State to achieve these adequately programmed projects critical to Newport's future as well.

**Response to M-11-1**

Thank you for your comments on the FFY2022-2031 STIP.

The State shares the City of Newport's excitement to see the Pell Bridge Ramps Projects (TIPIDs 1364 and 9201) through to their conclusion and to enjoy the benefits that these changes will deliver.

The Bellevue Avenue Project is under TIPID 5107. The project has seen no change in scope versus the prior STIP, and as discussed with the City of Newport the project incorporates the funding previously under TIPID 5105, Thames and Spring Street Improvements, in the FFY18-27 STIP. In the previous STIP, TIPID 5105 was programmed for \$8.5M in funding while TIPID 5107

was programmed for \$3M. The sum total of funding, \$11.5M, is the amount programmed for TIPID 5107 in this new FFY 2022-2031 STIP.

The State looks forward to working with the City of Newport to address any additional questions or concerns regarding this project, or others.

## **M-12: Woonsocket,**

**City:** Woonsocket

**Submit Date:** 07/12/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

### **Comment M-12-1**

The City of Woonsocket has multiple concerns with the proposed summer 2021 STIP Amendment. The amendment proposes the elimination or delay of many important City projects. The City is especially alarmed by the delay in bridge repairs to the Singleton Street, River Street, Fairmount Street, and Sayles Street Bridges.

These bridges are already in need of structural repair and improvements to reduce their negative environmental impact on the Blackstone River and improve their appearance. The most current version of the STIP proposes deferring maintenance by five years, with a completion date of 2031. These bridges require priority attention but appear to be receiving the opposite treatment.

The City is also concerned with the delay in pavement/sidewalk/ADA improvements to two of its major roadways, Social Street and Mendon Road. Social Street a significant and heavily traveled commercial corridor in the City and an important economic development opportunity. Deferring maintenance to this road for three additional years from a completion date of 2025 to 2028 without explanation will discourage private investment in this area. Mendon Road is a major thoroughfare through east Woonsocket. The City is concerned that resurfacing and ADA improvements will now be deferred to a completion date of 2031, a decade from the present year.

The City is concerned with the delay in the completion of the Blackstone River Bikeway. Currently three of five Woonsocket segments have been completed, but none of the segments abut each other significantly limiting the trail's usefulness. The remaining Woonsocket segments of the bikeway were previously slated for completion by 2022 and 2023. Now work will not even begin until 2023 and the two segments will not be completed until 2025 and 2028.

Below is a list of changes proposed in the Summer 2021 STIP Amendment. Please provide an explanation or context for each change.

Items eliminated from the STIP:

1. Bernon Street Bridge at Blackstone River (TIP ID 6683) | Previously included with Bridge Group 26B | Previously slated for completion 2023-2026.
2. Harrison Ave Railroad Bridge (TIP ID 6695) | Previously included with Bridge Group 48 | Previously slated for completion 2023-2027
3. Blackstone/Peters River to Mouth | Previously included as TIP ID 2044 | Previously slated for completion: 2020-2027
  - a. Included Drainage improvement to improve water quality, in the following Woonsocket water bodies: Blackstone River, Cherry Brook, Mill River, and Peters River.
4. Train Station Maintenance and Repairs | RICAP | Previously included as TIP ID 7901 | Previously received ongoing funding
5. Grade Crossing Surface and Signal Projects | Previously included as TIP ID 1443 | Previously Funded through 2025
  - a. Included rehab of at grade crossings, at the following Woonsocket crossing: River Street near Fairmount and Very.

Items where project has been delayed:

6. All bridge projects included in the Corridor – Woonsocket item (TIP ID 3207, previously Bridge Group 26B and Bridge Group 48) have been moved out two years. Previously they were slated for completion in 2026. Now they are slated for completion in 2028. Privilege Street at Mill River is an exception and was moved from 2027 to 2028.
7. All Bridge Projects included in the Bridge Group 26C item (TIP ID 9989 previously Bridge Group 26B and Bridge Group 48) have been significantly delayed. Previously these bridges were slated for completion in 2026 or 2027. Now they are slated for completion in 2031.
8. Resurfacing and sidewalk improvements to Social Street (TIP ID 3207, previously TIP ID 5312), from Main Street to the MA state line were previously slated for completion 2025 but have been delayed to 2028.
9. Resurfacing and sidewalk/ADA improvements to Mendon Road (TIP ID 9538), from Cumberland Hill Road to the MA state line were previously slated for completion in 2027, but have been delayed to 2031.
10. Blackstone River Bikeway Segment 8A (TIP ID 5293) was previously slated for completion in 2023, but has been significantly delayed to 2028.

11. Blackstone River Bikeway Segment 8B (TIP ID 5319) was previously slated for completion in 2022, but has been delayed to 2025.

Items added without input from the City's Planning Department:

12. TIP ID 5419, 2025 Roadway Departure Mitigation (Mendon Road between Cumberland Hill Road and Cass Ave) was added to the STIP. The City would like to have a conversation about this STIP item to potentially identify traffic calming measures that could be implemented rather than a median guardrail which is out of character with the area.

The City relies on the STIP to guide its decision making processes. This becomes challenging when the document cannot be relied upon for accuracy. It is obviously the City's preference that, where possible, eliminated projects be recovered and delayed projects be restored to their previous schedule. This is most important for the historic bridges crossing the Blackstone River which are in dire need of attention.

**Response to M-12-1**

Thank you for your comments.

The Singleton Street, River Street, Fairmount Street, and Sayles Street Bridges were isolated into their own group due to their complexity and status as historic, locally-owned and maintained structures. It is RIDOT's understanding that the City of Woonsocket engaged Pare Engineering to design the gusset plate retrofits for these city-owned structures, but the design status is unknown at this time. The project you reference, Bridge Group 26C, will include major rehabilitation and address the long-term serviceability of these bridges.

Improvements to Social Street and Mendon Road remain priorities for the Department. Both projects were delayed due to budgetary constraints and to accommodate the schedules of other construction projects in the area. Project schedules may always be adjusted pending the receipt of additional funding or fluctuations in other nearby projects.

Your concerns regarding the Blackstone River Bikeway are noted.

The Bernon Street Bridge No. 095201 is in 'Good' condition based on the last inspection. This bridge is owned by the City of Woonsocket.

The Harrison Avenue RR Bridge No. 068701 is in 'Poor' condition based on the last inspection. This bridge is owned by the City of Woonsocket. While the condition is poor, the structural capacity at this time is still adequate due to the strength of arch bridges in general. All bridges will continue to be carefully monitored via future inspections, and all project scopes, budgets, and schedules are subject to change with each inspection.

TIP ID 2044, along with several other stormwater and drainage projects, was consolidated into STIP ID 7550 to simplify that section of the STIP.



TIP ID 7901, along with several other operational line items, was consolidated into TIP ID 7910 to simplify the STIP.

TIP ID 1443 remains fully funded in the STIP. The specific locations of planned grade crossing work may be updated in the future.

The timeline for the completion of the bridges in TIP ID 3207 has been adjusted to reflect that additional design time may be required to incorporate pavement resurfacing and sidewalk repairs into this job. The resulting project is intended to minimize disruption to the surrounding area by consolidating bridge work and pavement work previously programmed under multiple line items into a single contract.

TIP ID 9989 is comprised of historic, city-owned structures. This project is programmed to allow ample time for design, and to avoid construction conflicts with other projects in the area.

As stated above, your concerns regarding Social Street, Mendon Road, and the Blackstone River Bikeway are noted.

Lastly, TIP ID 5419 consists of making pedestrian improvements (e.g. crosswalks) along the corridor and at the Cumberland Hill Road intersection, and enhancements at the curves along the corridor (e.g. signage, high friction, roadside guardrail). Median guardrail is not being considered as part of this project. Since the project is not proposed until 2025, concept plans would not be developed until 2023 and coordination with the City can begin at that time. RIDOT would be happy to meet with the City at any time before then.

### **M-13: South Kingstown,**

**City:** Wakefield

**Submit Date:** 07/11/2021

**Submit Method:** Email

#### **Comment M-13-1**

In addition to the projects contained in the draft STIP and based on a review of the projects within South Kingstown, we would like to advise you that in 2017 the town made nine recommendations along with prioritization of these items (attached). After an initial review of the proposed FFY 2022-2031 Draft State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) the town's Priority numbers four (4) and five (5) should be included in the proposed draft of the Draft STIP.

#### **Priority #4 - Old Tower Hill Road Traffic Safety and Pedestrian Accommodation Study**

Old Tower Hill Road, from Route 1 to Route 108, is the major access point to Wakefield, while also servicing the community's Commercial Highway district. As such, this corridor is an important gateway for the community and a major thoroughfare for residents and visitors. This segment of Old Tower Hill Road experienced 1,031 accidents over the past ten years (June 2007 to June 2017).

The high number of accidents indicates a problem with the traffic pattern within the corridor, which needs to be analyzed to determine appropriate mitigation measures. Additionally, much of the sidewalk along the corridor is in need of repair or replacement. Such pedestrian improvements would provide a better connection between the commercial district of Old Tower Hill Road and the core area of Main Street and the surrounding residential neighborhoods. The Town would also like to see additional landscaping incorporated into the design of this stretch of road, given its significance as a major gateway into South Kingstown. If designed as a landscaped median, a dual purpose may be served as such could provide both traffic calming and drainage mitigation. The high number of accidents annually, as well as the significance of the corridor as a gateway into Town makes this project as a high priority. This project, combined with pedestrian improvements to Route 108, was proposed in the Town, 2016, 2012 and 2007 STIP applications, but were not funded.

**Priority #5 - *Route 108 Sidewalk Installation and Drainage Improvements***

This project seeks to install sidewalks along Route 108, from the Meadowbrook Housing complex to the Curtis Corner Road/Saugatucket Road intersection along the easterly side of the road, thence transitioning to the west side of the right-of-way to the intersection with Route 138. This project also proposes drainage improvements and the addition of landscaping.

This road segment is heavily traveled as a main transit route to and from the University of Rhode Island, both by private vehicles and via RIPTA's regional service. Existing bus stops along this stretch of road are not accessible by sidewalk, and the lack of such causes pedestrians to traverse the highway shoulder, creating a dangerous condition. Pedestrians and bicyclists utilize this road segment on a frequent basis, and the current roadway configuration does not provide for a safe or convenient multi-modal usage environment. Additionally, stormwater courses down the highway corridor to Peace Dale without treatment or comprehensive management, contributing to drainage problems in the Peace Dale Flats area. Adding sidewalks, improved access management, and best management practices for stormwater mitigation would enhance the area's function, safety, environmental quality, and aesthetics.

In 2018, RIDOT will undertake improvements to the intersection of Route 108, Curtis Corner Road, and Saugatucket Road, including limited installation of sidewalks and drainage improvements. Given the potential connection to these improvements and the reasons listed above, Town staff proposes this project as a high priority. The estimated cost of this project is \$1.75 million. This project was included in the Town's 2016, 2012 and 2007 STIP applications, but was not funded.

**Response to M-13-1**

Due to significant funding limitations the Division of Statewide Planning is not currently extending a solicitation for new projects to enter the FFY 2022-2031 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Due to these funding limitations we do not anticipate a call for new projects to occur until at least 2022 and still subject to funding availability. When an open solicitation does occur, the Division of Statewide Planning will provide notification to all Rhode

Island municipalities and stakeholders to submit projects applications for the STIP. Detail guidance on how to submit a project application will also be provided. The Town of South Kingstown may provide these projects for consideration at that time.

In addition, RIDOT completed in 2021 improvements to Old Tower Hill Road in Wakefield. These improvements included pavement resurfacing, installation of a center landscaped median, storm water improvements, new curbing and Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant sidewalks, and a buffered bike lane for both directions of travel and decorative planters.

## **O-1: Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council,**

**City:** Providence

**Submit Date:** 06/25/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

### **Comment O-1-1**

The Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council (WRWC) understands very well that we are living in an era of deep inequities, a worsening climate crisis, too many traffic fatalities, and an aging population of Rhode Islanders. We must pursue a robust, affordable, sustainable and equitable transportation system that will ensure we are building not just responsively, but proactively addressing these issues and many more. Regardless of age, ability, income, or background, the streets of Rhode Island should accommodate everyone safely and comfortably as they go from A to B, whether you go by motor vehicle or by walking, biking, skateboard, wheelchair or any other active means.

For these reasons, the WRWC urges of the STIP process:

- Be more open, transparent, and democratic, hold more than just one public hearing in two communities, and do real public outreach to raise awareness of these serious funding decisions.
- Account for the accelerating climate and traffic safety crises by doubling the proposed funding for active transportation both within the 10-year frame and the 4-year constrained funding period.
- Address the continued legacy of racism in transportation by prioritizing more funding to the Special Population Group Tracts as outlined in RIDOT's Transportation Equity Benefit Analysis.
- Use additional funding to implement the Bicycle Mobility Plan (BMP) for those roadways which are candidate bikeways in the BMP. Statewide active transportation partners worked very hard and interviewed a great number of people and communities in the development of the BMP. This is the time to commit to a statewide concerted effort to implement this thoughtful, well-researched plan.
- Provide funding to the towns for striping and other accommodations for bicycles on roadways in the outyears of the STIP.

- Create an "ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION" office at RIDOT coordinate active transportation and alignment with the BMP when considering design and construction of all transportation projects including roads and bridges throughout RI.
- Collect and monitor counts of bicycle and pedestrian use of multi-use paths.
- Develop, implement and publicize a service evaluation framework for evaluating bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure that includes feedback from actual users.

**Response to O-1-1**

These comments were included in another comment submission. Please see responses under comment I-14.

**O-2: Hank Webster**

**Submit Date:** 06/30/2021

**Submit Method:** Oral

**Comment O-2-1**

Hank is RI Director of Acadia Center. Has past experience in transportation council membership roles. Suggests there should be an addendum to the STIP addresses the Act on Climate. Believes there should be a transition from a car centric model to one that is alternative transportation friendly. Specifically, Route 2, near Natick Road (Warwick Mall area), there is no where to cross Route 2. In general, there are not enough crosswalks on Route 2. Point is, the STIP should be aligned with citizens that need transportation improvements the most, such as those using electric wheel chairs. Also, people would prefer to use low cost options such as transit. In addition, there should be more opportunity for people to weigh in on the STIP.

**Response to O-2-1**

Thank you for attending the STIP 2022-31 Public Hearing and providing comment.

We agree that climate change is a vital part of making transportation investment decisions and can be the driver of many projects that make up a comprehensive plan to address the emissions that are attributable to the transportation sector. Under the 2021 Act on Climate, the state will develop a plan to incrementally reduce climate emissions to net-zero by 2050. The plan will be updated every 5 years and will address areas such as environmental injustices, public health inequities and a fair employment transition as fossil-fuel jobs are replaced by green energy jobs. This is a nascent law that may drive change in the STIP analysis.

Transportation equity is something we hope to address more with the onset of the E-STIP, so that grading of projects will be in higher consideration of the elements that both help reduce the number of cars on the road and give Rhode Islanders more transportation options.

Connectivity, as you mentioned in your comment about crossing on Route 2, continues to be in consideration of every project that is programmed in the STIP. We strive to promote a safety-based, complete street approach to constructing projects. RIDOT is submitting a FY 2021 RAISE grant application that addresses your concerns about the East Avenue corridor in Warwick, a project that includes bicycle and pedestrian, signalization and other safety improvements along RI-113 adjacent to the malls and along Bald Hill Road. These improvements will be made alongside an investment in bus access along the corridor to increase accessibility to CCRI's Knight Campus and its RIPTA bus hub, and provide electric vehicle charging stations free to the public at the campus.

For the areas you highlighted outside of the grant application project limits (south of Tollgate Rd., north of the Pawtuxet River), we suggest you submit requests to the State Traffic Commission, which reviews requests for traffic control devices such as stop signs, traffic signals and roundabouts and other traffic and safety initiatives such as crosswalks, speed limit changes, and striping changes.

Thank you also for the feedback on our comment period approach. With the onset of COVID-19, we started the SmartComment tool so that those who wish to provide feedback can do so on the web and do not need to attend a public hearing in person. We will continue to make changes to the way we take feedback in future years.

### **O-3: Providence Preservation Society,**

**City:** Providence

**Submit Date:** 07/01/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

#### **Comment O-3-1**

TIP 5204: The Providence Preservation Society is opposed to the relocation of the central bus hub unless an appropriate location is defined. The Clifford and Eddy Street location is suboptimal for riders. Riders should take precedent over other concerns, such as easy procurement of a National Grid building. The location will require crossing a major artery to enter downtown. It is too small to allow for future expansion. It is too close to the river and will be a detriment to further improvements along the riverfront. We support improvements to Providence Station, provided they be thoughtfully designed both for aesthetic compatibility with the existing station and for the comfort and convenience of transit passengers.

With regard to bridge replacements and upgrades, we support these when pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure is included.

TAP 5178 We support enhancements to the Woony Greenway.

#### **Response to O-3-1**

The Providence Multi-Hub Project [STIP ID 5204] is included in the STIP with funding programmed for FFY 2022. The project will establish a strategic hub in the Innovation District, enhance connectivity to the Providence Train Station, and reconfigure Kennedy Plaza. The creation of a multi-hub system brings many benefits to the transit network, including alleviating congestion at a single-hub and allowing for the physical improvement of pedestrian and transit amenities at several locations. As we continue to advance the project, we want to continue to hear from the public to keep the process focused on users and so we continue to provide the level of service expected from RIPTA riders. We believe sustained urban development will depend on having modern transit infrastructure consistent with the existing urban fabric and operations that become a more preferred way to travel within and around Providence. Your feedback on this project is taken into account. We appreciate your support of bridge replacements and upgrades with complete streets features and for enhancements to the Woonasquatucket River Greenway project (WRG - STIP ID 5178).

#### **O-4: Green Energy Consumers Alliance,**

**City:** Providence

**Submit Date:** 07/12/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

##### **Comment O-4-1**

Attached, please find a joint letter expressing feedback on the STIP signed by nine organizations. Thank you for your consideration.

We, the nine undersigned organizations, are writing together to urge the Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning, RI Department of Transportation, and RI Public Transit Authority to better consider the impact of climate-warming and health-harming emissions in the proposed State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for 2022 to 2031.

The STIP does not reflect the emissions reduction mandate established by the Act On Climate. Act On Climate, signed into law in April 2021, mandates that Rhode Island achieve a 45% economy-wide reduction in greenhouse gases compared to 1990 levels by 2030. Transportation is the state's largest source of climate-warming emissions, making up 36% of the total. Any plan to meet the state's 2030 emissions target must include a strategy for decarbonizing transportation. As proposed, the STIP for 2022 to 2031 does not acknowledge how its investments will help or hinder the state's 2030 mandate. This is a major oversight; most of the stakeholder organizations for the STIP, including the Division of Planning, RIPTA, and RIDOT, sit on the Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council (EC4) that is in charge of developing the compliance plan for the Act On Climate.

We recommend the STIP be amended to include a full analysis of how each project contributes to statewide greenhouse gas emissions. The transportation infrastructure projects that Rhode Island invests in will influence emissions for decades to come. Some investments, such as projects to expand safe cycling routes, will exert downward pressure on emissions by enabling more Rhode Islanders to travel by bike instead of by car. Other investments, such as highway

lane expansions, will encourage more car travel and increase vehicle-miles-travelled in the long term, which will increase transportation emissions.

We support the STIP's emphasis on maintaining a good state of repair for roads and bridges. However, the STIP should calculate and report the greenhouse gas emissions impact of each proposed *expansion* project (such as the \$205 million widening of I-95 northbound) to make sure investments are consistent with the Act On Climate goal while the EC4 develops its strategy for decarbonization. Projects that reduce or eliminate emissions must be prioritized over projects that are likely to increase emissions if the state is to remain in compliance with the Act On Climate. We recommend the STIP analyze both short term (2030) and long-term (2040 and 2050) impacts of all projects.

We also note that STIP project #5204 gives RIDOT authority to "reconfigure" the Kennedy Plaza bus hub - meaning to break up the hub, without a suitable alternative, and disperse the buses, thus making the system more confusing and less convenient for existing and future riders. Riders, planners, environmentalists, community groups, civil rights activists, and the Providence City Council have expressed concern about the impact of bus hub breakup. We believe this project would have a negative impact on transit ridership, and subsequently increase vehicle-miles-travelled, and should be reviewed in light of the Act On Climate mandate.

Prepare for more investments in active mobility, transit, and electric vehicles. The EC4 has until December 31, 2022, to create a decarbonization plan for Rhode Island according to the law. It would be counterproductive and perhaps impossible to meet the 2030 goal if the current draft of the STIP is executed. We support a doubling of the current budget for active mobility, from \$54 million to \$108 million in the fiscally constrained period of FFY 2022-2025, in line with the state's Bicycle Mobility Plan. This small reallocation would bring the total to 3.6% of the STIP budget during this period and would reflect a clear commitment to the goals of the Act On Climate by the state agencies involved.

As the EC4 works on developing an implementation plan for the Act On Climate, we expect to see the next STIP consider improvements to the electric vehicle charging network, which is absent from the 2022-2031 budget. We also support a full implementation of the Transit Master Plan, which would cost \$54 to \$194 million annually to execute.

Implement a more robust methodology for the Transportation Equity Benefit Analysis. In section 5 of the STIP, the Transportation Equity Benefit Analysis (TEBA) assesses the distribution of transportation investments in select population groups, including areas predominantly populated by low-income people, people of color, people with disabilities, or households with children. We commend the STIP for considering equity and for its work in mapping vulnerable population groups. However, we believe the TEBA methodology to be flawed because the allocation of investment dollars is the sole factor analyzed in determining equity. TEBA does not consider whether the investments improve or worsen air quality, mobility, or greenhouse gas emissions in the studied population groups. The omission of cumulative health impacts in the STIP is problematic because the burden of air pollution is not shared equally among all

population groups. Some expensive projects, such as those to expand highways, add new lanes, and add more highway ramps, may end up increasing the exposure gap and increasing health inequities in the populations studied by TEBA.

A complete equity analysis should include information on whether the proposed projects would expand or shrink cumulative exposure to tailpipe pollutants, including NO<sub>x</sub>, SO<sub>x</sub>, and particulate matter. Projects that are found to increase vehicle tailpipe pollution in communities already overburdened with poor air quality (whether coming from vehicle tailpipes or stationary sources) should be reviewed, deprioritized, or eliminated from the STIP.

We thank you for the opportunity to comment and look forward to working with you to plan for a decarbonized, healthier, and more connected Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

Mal Skowron, Green Energy Consumers Alliance

Patricia Raub, RI Transit Riders

Kathleen Gannon, RI Bicycle Coalition

John Flaherty, GrowSmart Rhode Island

Hank Webster, Acadia Center

Helene Miller, Partnership for Providence Parks

Sue AnderBois, The Nature Conservancy

Paulina Muratore, Union of Concerned Scientists

Meg Curran, Conservation Law Foundation

#### **Response to O-4-1**

RIPTA, RIDOT, and Statewide Planning appreciate your advocacy to promote a fully integrated transportation system that is integrated with housing and economic development strategies, as well as seeks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Projects and programs in the 2022-2031 STIP go a long way to promote a more equitable and climate sensitive transportation future. In addition, we have developed Goals, Strategies, and a Vision to attain a desirable transportation future that is equitable, effective, and consistent with environmental goals. As you are aware, efforts for ongoing improvements for active transportation, transit, and a more complete and multi-modal approach at transportation remain at the forefront of programming considerations moving forward. As evidenced in multiple parts of the LRTP, BMP, TMP, and CMP, which all place emphasis on a multi-modal transportation system for improvement. As more projects are developed and analyzed with this approach, we anticipate that Rhode Island will become a more resilient system that is less damaging to the environment.

Climate change is also an important part of making transportation investment decisions and can be the driver of many projects that make up a comprehensive plan to address the emissions that are attributable to the transportation sector. Under the 2021 Act on Climate, the state will



develop a plan to incrementally reduce climate emissions to net-zero by 2050. The plan will be updated every 5 years and will address areas such as environmental injustices, public health inequities and a fair employment transition as fossil-fuel jobs are replaced by green energy jobs. This is a nascent law that may drive change in the STIP analysis. Your feedback is helpful and will be considered as changes to business operations mandated by the legislation are discussed.

As you may already be aware, the major capital projects (for example, \$205 million widening of I-95 northbound) are subject to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the requisite regulations of the Clean Air Act. These projects are designed to reduce congestion and overall improve air quality and analysis to demonstrate this and compliance with NEPA will be performed. We recognize that reliance on cars as the primary form of travel for many Rhode Islanders and the fossil fuels being burned by on-road vehicles hinders our progress toward a greener future. The State is simultaneously addressing these issues as we work to address state of good repair and utilize federal discretionary grants designed to improve our interstates which should not be forsaken or delayed. Your suggestions regarding analyzing each project contribution to statewide greenhouse gas emissions is exemplary and will be considered as we discuss statewide operations consistent with the Act on Climate.

The FFY 2022-2031 STIP is financially constrained and the State has a limited amount of funding resources. In the event that additional federal funding is received, there may be an opportunity to accelerate project timelines on many of the bicycle and pedestrian projects, and to include potentially more projects conceptualized in the Bicycle Mobility Plan. Please note that the proposed Active Transportation Program accounts for \$180M of funding, which represents approximately 6% of all capital project expenditures over the ten year STIP window (FFY2022-2031). In addition, several projects in other programs (Bridge, Pavement, Traffic Safety, etc.) include components of active transportation as well.

We appreciate your feedback on the TEBA and have taken your suggestions into account. Rhode Island has worked with our federal partners in the past to develop and improve the equity benefit analysis to this point and we will continue to do so in order to improve the outcome of transportation investments on minority, low-income, and underserved communities. We also feel that your participation in the discourse will improve how we analyze the effects of the transportation system in future programs. Your concerns are our concerns in respect to equal treatment of all Rhode Island citizens and developing and designing a transportation future that has residual benefits and reduces the burden of vehicle emissions and transportation infrastructure on human health.

## **O-5: The Nature Conservancy,**

**City:** Providence

**Submit Date:** 07/12/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

### **Comment O-5-1**

Referenced report: "Supporting Rural Communities Through Clean Transportation Investments" prepared by EBP for The Nature Conservancy, August 2020.

The Nature Conservancy is a global organization dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. We have chapters in all fifty U.S. states and in nearly 80 countries around the globe. Here in Rhode Island, we steward more than 10,000 acres of protected land. At The Nature Conservancy, we realize that we cannot succeed in our core mission without seriously addressing climate change. The science is clear and unequivocal: *we need to fully decarbonize our economy by 2050, with major emissions reductions before 2030.*

Act On Climate, signed into law in April 2021, mandates that Rhode Island achieve a 45% economy-wide reduction in greenhouse gases compared to 1990 levels by 2030, and net zero carbon emissions by 2050. The transportation sector currently represents the largest percentage of Rhode Island's greenhouse gas emissions. If we are to meet the state's mandatory carbon emissions reductions goals, decarbonizing transportation needs to be part of that effort. The STIP is an important tool for the State's investments and priorities in the transportation and mobility sectors. As proposed, the STIP for 2022 to 2031 does not include adequate investments to achieve the goals mandated in the Act on Climate legislation.

The Nature Conservancy has studied mobility and low-carbon transportation - and the types of investments we could make in Rhode Island and in communities across our region. We did this research in light of the proposed Transportation and Climate Initiative, but the findings are intentionally designed to be relevant outside of that specific policy mechanism. I want to share with you three key pieces of research that we have done in the last 18 months and some of their major take-aways. This research includes two separate polls (March 2020 and January 2021) and a regional report examining and assessing transportation and related investment opportunities for rural communities.

#### Transportation Investments Polling in Rhode Island:

The Nature Conservancy in Rhode Island conducted two separate polls related to transportation-related investments and the Transportation and Climate Initiative to gauge the support of Rhode Islanders for this type of policy and related investments. Both polls were done with the firm FM3 Research, and we are more than happy to give a presentation on the full results to any member of this committee.

*March 2020 poll:* The poll conducted in March 2020 included 400 interviews with Rhode Islanders across the state on both landline and cell phones. Interviewees were likely voters in the November 2020 election. This was important because the poll also included questions on the Green Bond that had been proposed in then-Governor Raimondo's budget.

This initial poll showed overwhelming support for transportation-related investments and a program like TCI in Rhode Island. Some specific take-aways include:

- 66% of Rhode Islanders saw climate change as an extremely very serious problem and one of the top-ranked issues.

- 68% of Rhode Islanders supported joining a regional partnership to reduce transportation emissions that was described in the survey like this: Some people have proposed that Rhode Island join with 12 northeastern states and the city of Washington, DC to create a clean transportation fund that would invest in transportation choices that reduce pollution, including expanding public transportation, creating incentives and infrastructure for electric vehicles, and safe ways for people to walk and bike, including in our cities and in small towns and rural areas of the state.
- Support was strong across age and genders:
  - o 92% of adults aged 18-29
  - o 65% of men and 70% of women
  - o Above 59% support across all age groups
 Support was similar across the state:
  - o Bristol County: 66%, Kent County: 68%, Newport County: 66%, Providence County: 67%, Washington County: 70%
 Rhode Islanders were willing to pay for these investments:
  - o 66% expressed an overall Willingness to Pay
  - o 51% expressed a Willingness to Pay *at least* 10 cents/gallon

*January 2021 poll:* TNC contracted with FM3 Research for another poll that was conducted in January 2021. This poll contained questions about the Transportation and Climate Initiative and the Green Bond that was scheduled for special election in March 2021. For the TCI portion of the poll, we were interested in understanding if the pandemic and other events of 2020 had influenced Rhode Islander’s support for the program.

Because this poll included questions relevant to the Green Bond, it focused on Rhode Islanders who were likely voters in the March Special Election. Our pollsters flagged for us that these likely voters (and thus our sample of these voters) were likely to skew slightly more conservative and slightly older than the general Rhode Island population.

While so much in the world has changed in the last year, this poll continued to demonstrate support for transportation- related investments and a program like TCI in Rhode Island. Some specific take-aways include:

- Continued strong overall support: 61% of Rhode Islanders support joining TCI
- 62% of Rhode Islanders continue to support paying for these investments
- Key messages that resonated with voters included:
  - o Air quality: Transitioning the transportation system away from fossil fuels will mean less pollutions in the air and water and that this will lead to less asthma and lung disease. This message resonated with 73% of Rhode Islanders

- o Options: This message was about how expanding transportation options helps Rhode Islanders get to jobs, school, training programs and other appointments. 62% of Rhode Islanders found this compelling.

### Supporting Rural Communities Through Clean Transportation Investments Report:

The Nature Conservancy also worked with EBP (a consulting firm) to release a regional report to examine and assess transportation and related investments that can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and also provide mobility, economic, and other benefits to rural communities across the TCI region. This report built on focus groups and information gathering in rural communities across the region. (A copy of the report is attached to this public comment.)

Why rural communities? The Nature Conservancy identified gaps in knowledge and research on the transportation needs of rural communities and the solutions that would work best for them. Our colleagues in other states were finding that rural residents felt disconnected from decisions around transportation investments and had unique transportation needs. In particular, we found that rural residents drive more and have fewer to no alternatives to driving for necessities (such as doctor appointments or getting to work). We also found that there are a lot of lower income people living in rural communities who are paying a large percentage of their monthly budgets on transportation and mobility. Rural communities also tended to have different demographics than other communities, including higher percentages of older residents and people with disabilities.

Through polling analysis, we identified two key viewpoints of rural residents:

- A misperception that state transportation investments favor urban and suburban communities over rural communities.
- Rural communities voiced support for potential transportation investments that can improve mobility and access and support local rural economic development.

The goal of the report is to help decisionmakers identify transportation investments that are best in their local contexts. As such the report provides:

- A **menu** of potential transportation investments for rural communities
- Quantitative and qualitative **analysis of impacts** of those investments (for greenhouse gas emissions as well as economic, public health, and access impacts)
- Assessments of the equity and resilience impacts and potential **implementation pathways and timelines**.

The menu of options includes nine different options and analyzes them across many criteria so local decisionmakers can best understand the implications for local contexts. The options include (these are not ranked):

- Facilitate the adoption of electric and hybrid personal vehicles in rural areas
- Facilitate the conversion of public fleets in rural areas to electric and hybrid vehicles

- Facilitate the electrification of freight vehicles (trucks) that pass through and serve rural areas
- Facilitate electrification of truck stops in rural areas
- Facilitate more use of rail freight and barges in the region
- Improve intra-regional and local public transportation and shared mobility in rural areas
- Improve inter-regional public transportation in rural areas
- Improve broadband connectivity
- Invest in town centers

While these investments were studied specific to rural communities, the same types of investments can and would benefit urban and suburban communities as well. For example, as we've seen with the pandemic, increased access to broadband can help all Rhode Island families reduce their reliance on transportation and access work and school remotely. We have also seen investing in town centers, green and complete streets ordinances being introduced in municipalities across the state is just one example, it's as important in rural areas as it is in the various neighborhood centers across Providence.

### Conclusion

To meet the science-based climate goals that Act on Climate requires of Rhode Island, we need to be making bold transportation-related investments in our state. Our polling shows that these are programs and investments that Rhode Islanders support and are willing to pay for. The Rural Investments report demonstrates that there are a range of potential investments for rural and urban communities that can be customized for each location and benefit specific community needs.

The climate crisis is real and urgent. Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

#### **Response to O-5-1**

Thank you for your comment on clean transportation investments as part of the FY 2022-2031 STIP. RIDOT, the Division of Statewide Planning, and RIPTA were all a part of the of the state Mobility Innovation Working Group, which issued this supportive report on the state's support of TCI. For further information please visit <http://climatechange.ri.gov/documents/mwg-clean-trans-innovation-report.pdf>.

Climate change is also an important part of making transportation investment decisions and can be the driver of many projects that make up a comprehensive plan to address the emissions that are attributable to the transportation sector. Under the 2021 Act on Climate, the state will develop a plan to incrementally reduce climate emissions to net-zero by 2050. The plan will be updated every 5 years and will address areas such as environmental injustices, public health inequities and a fair employment transition as fossil-fuel jobs are replaced by green energy jobs. This is a nascent law that may drive change in the STIP analysis. Your feedback is helpful and will be considered as changes to business operations mandated by the legislation are discussed.

## **O-6: Mass. Sierra Club,**

**City:** Boston

**Submit Date:** 07/12/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

### **Comment O-6-1**

1) Weekend service to Wickford Junction should be instituted immediately. It is inequitable not to include this 20-mile segment in weekend service.

2) Currently, the segment from Wickford Jct. to New London is the only one on the Northeast Corridor without any commuter rail service. The Mass. Sierra Club supports extending commuter rail services to close the gap from Wickford Jct. to New London. For example, RI could build on its existing partnership with the MBTA to extend the Providence Line to Kingston. This station already has Amtrak service which creates considerable synergy. And URI also makes this an attractive stop. RI could then work with Connecticut to extend Shore Line East to the same station. A future phase could involve enhancing service to T.F. Green/Hillsgrove esp. because of the airport to add Amtrak and SLE connections. Developing these services would increase the mobility of residents of all three states involved with frequent low-fare options.

3) RI needs to develop a trackage plan with Amtrak to improve service, increase capacity, and provide redundancy. This could involve a combination of electrification of commuter rail, high-level platforms, adding station overtake sidings (e.g., at Kingston, Wickford Junction, TF Green) and more third track. It is worth noting that the MBTA provides commuter rail in Rhode Island and Massachusetts along the Northeast Corridor, but these states are the only ones on the Corridor without any electric commuter service.

### **Response to O-6-1**

Thank you for your comments and suggestions for the Draft FFY 2022-2031 STIP.

The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted transit ridership nationwide, and commuter rail has been among the hardest hit modes. Historical data in Rhode Island shows weekend ridership is typically about half that of weekday, and Rhode Island's weekday ridership is down 80-90% in 2021 from pre-pandemic levels. As riders continue to return to transit, RIDOT continuously evaluates if and when weekend service to TF Green Airport and/or Wickford Junction is warranted.

The market analysis developed during the Transit Master Plan study phase does not anticipate a market for commuter rail service south of Wickford Junction in the 2040 time frame. Wickford Junction is primarily used for Boston-based commuters (roughly 8 out of 10 riders), and it is very successful in attracting a large proportion of overall Boston-based employees from South County. Still, through RIDOT's participation in the Northeast Corridor Commission, it

continuously coordinates with representatives from MBTA, MassDOT, and ConnDOT on passenger rail service improvements. The feasibility of extension of existing services and new potential services (e.g. Rhode Island intrastate service) are regularly evaluated by our agencies.

Finally, the Rhode Island Department of Transportation is a member of the Northeast Corridor Commission working with Amtrak and other states along the Northeast Corridor to develop short, medium, and long-range rail corridor plans. Short-term improvements are identified in the Northeast Corridor Capital Investment Plan. This plan includes ongoing track maintenance and special projects such as the new Pawtucket/Central Falls Station, the rehabilitation of Providence Station, and design for an Amtrak stop at TF Green Airport. Medium-term improvements are identified in the recently-published Connect NEC 2035. This plan calls for electrified MBTA service, a completed Amtrak stop at TF Green, and a third track in Massachusetts between Readville and Canton, among other projects. This plan estimates that commuter rail patrons riding from Wickford Junction to Boston would save 16 minutes once the capital improvements are in place. Long-term capital projects and service objectives are highlighted in the 2017 NEC Future Record of Decision which followed a multi-year Tier I Environmental Impact Statement.

## **O-7: Grow Smart RI,**

**City:** Providence

**Submit Date:** 07/12/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

### **Comment O-7-1**

Grow Smart RI is a statewide coalition of business and civic leaders and concerned community stakeholders that provides policy guidance to those seeking thoughtful, long-term economic growth with enduring and equitably shared community benefits. We have a 23-year history of promoting best practice tools and strategies for advancing economic and community revitalization, including a robust multi-modal transportation system. One of the principal ways we do this is by promoting public and private investments in a 21st century transportation system that's fully integrated with sustainable housing and economic development strategies and goals that benefit all Rhode Islanders.

### State of Good Repair

We begin with praise for RIDOT's continued strategy of tenaciously and aggressively investing to bring Rhode Island's bridges, once worst-in-the-nation, into a state of 90% sufficiency by 2025. This has been made possible through RIDOT's bold truck tolling proposal, called RhodeWorks, that was enacted by the General Assembly in 2015, with enthusiastic support from Grow Smart RI. The structural integrity and safety of our state's 1,162 bridges is of the utmost importance to safe mobility and economic competitiveness whether by car, truck, bus, bicycle or foot. We appreciate RIDOT's steadfast commitment to this goal.

### Vision, Goals and Strategies

The vision, goals and strategies outlined on p. 1-5 are also forward looking with an emphasis on providing effective and affordable transportation choices that are supportive of healthy communities, expand access to jobs and services, and promote a sustainable and competitive Rhode Island economy. They include: 1) Connect People and Places (*e.g. expand connectivity across modes*), 2) Maintain Transportation Infrastructure (*e.g. design roadways to increase transportation choices*), 3) Strengthen Communities (*e.g. improve individual and community health and foster social equity*), 4) Promote Environmental Sustainability (*e.g. reduce vehicle miles traveled, transportation greenhouse gas emissions*) and 5) Support Economic Growth (*e.g. expand connections to jobs*).

Our overriding concern is that the investment plan represented by the hundreds of individual projects budgeted in the STIP, particularly in the fiscally-constrained period of FFY 2022-2025, do not adequately reflect the long range vision, goals or strategies.

Additionally, the STIP does not reference or account for the landmark Act on Climate legislation that was signed into state law by Governor McKee in April, 2021 and that *mandates* a 45% economy-wide reduction in greenhouse gas emissions compared to 1990 levels by 2030. As proposed, the STIP for FFY 2022-2031 does not acknowledge how its investments will help or hinder emission reduction goals from the transportation sector which is the single-largest and fastest-growing source of emissions in Rhode Island.

#### Active Transportation

The funding level for the category of Active Transportation projects in the draft STIP is now proposed at \$52M for the fiscally-constrained period of FFY 2022-2025, representing 1.8% of the total STIP budget. That amount is approximately \$8M *less* than was budgeted for the same period in the most recent STIP. The recently adopted Statewide Bicycle Mobility Plan (BMP) includes a recommendation to double the funding for active transportation projects (see p. 86) and we note that the BMP was vetted through the state's Transportation Advisory Committee and approved by the State Planning Council, the same public bodies that vet and approve the STIP. We agree with this recommendation and propose reallocating an additional \$52M for Active Transportation projects for a total of \$104M for the period FFY 2022-2025, to include, among other initiatives, the full replacement of the closed bicycle bridges on the East Bay Bike Path, Rhode Island's flagship bike path. We further propose that the funding be reallocated from the approximately \$400M+ currently proposed for highway capacity expansion projects such as those along sections of I-95, I-195, I-295 and Routes 37 and 146 that would encourage more driving, increased vehicle miles traveled and increased greenhouse gas emissions. Reallocating these funds would respond to the surging post-Covid public demand for safe places to walk and bike and to the legislative mandate for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector.

#### Mass Transit

We believe the recently adopted and ambitious statewide Transit Master Plan (TMP) is a vitally important element of the STIP and one that can provide more residents and visitors with safe and convenient mobility across Rhode Island and the region, getting people where they're



going quickly, efficiently and affordably. This holds great promise for revitalizing our Main Streets and Downtowns, better connecting all Rhode Islanders with economic opportunity and all of life's essentials, while providing the means to measurably reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector. However, to ensure that the TMP is more than a plan that sits on a shelf, there needs to be an investment schedule aligned with the TMP for implementation.

While we note an increase in funding allocated to transit capital and operations in both the RIDOT and RIPTA line items of the STIP summary tables, it's not at all clear that the amounts are anywhere near sufficient to implement the recommendations outlined in the first ten years of the TMP. The TMP estimates average annual expenditures of **\$94-\$154M** for capital investments and an approximate doubling of current operating costs from \$112.9M to as much as **\$237M** annually. The STIP amounts proposed for capital investment average just **\$45.8M** annually and the amounts proposed for operations average just **\$115M** annually. We recommend reallocating funding from line items that support highway capacity expansion projects that would otherwise encourage more driving and increased emissions to sufficiently implement the Transit Master Plan.

Additionally, we call your attention to STIP project #5204 which gives RIDOT authority to reconfigure the Kennedy Plaza bus hub meaning to break up the hub, without a suitable alternative, and disperse bus stops among several downtown hubs, thus making the system more confusing to navigate and less convenient for existing and future riders. Transit riders, planners, environmentalists, community groups, civil rights activists and the Providence City Council have all opposed the break-up of a central bus hub. We believe this project would have a negative impact on transit ridership and subsequently vehicle miles traveled and should be revisited. We encourage state planners to reconsider co-locating an underground central bus hub adjacent to Providence Station as was proposed in a 2018 RFP process that RIDOT led.

#### Transportation Equity Benefit Analysis

We commend STIP drafters for including a consideration of equity in section 5, the Transportation Equity Benefits Analysis (TEBA) which assesses the distribution of transportation investments in select population groups, including areas predominantly populated by low-income Rhode Islanders, people of color, people with disabilities, or households with children. However, we find the methodology to be lacking because the allocation of investment dollars seems to be the sole factor analyzed in determining equity. TEBA does not appear to consider whether the investments improve or worsen air quality, mobility, or greenhouse gas emissions in the studied population groups. The omission of cumulative health impacts is problematic because the burden of air pollution is not shared equally among all population groups. Some expensive projects, such as those that expand highway capacity and traffic volumes, may end up increasing the exposure gap and increasing health inequities in the populations studied by TEBA.

We recommend a complete equity analysis to include information about whether proposed projects would expand or reduce cumulative exposure to tailpipe pollutants, including

NOx, SOx and particulate matter. Projects that are found to increase vehicle tailpipe pollution in communities that are already overburdened with poor air quality should be revisited, deprioritized, or eliminated from the STIP.

#### **Response to O-7-1**

RIPTA, RIDOT, and Statewide Planning appreciate your advocacy to promote a fully integrated transportation system that is integrated with housing and economic development strategies, as well as seeks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Projects and programs in the 2022-2031 STIP go a long way to promote a more equitable and climate sensitive transportation future. In addition, we have developed Goals, Strategies, and a Vision to attain a desirable transportation future that is equitable, effective, and consistent with environmental goals. As you are aware, efforts for ongoing improvements for active transportation, transit, and a more complete and multi-modal approach at transportation remain at the forefront of programming considerations moving forward. As evidenced in multiple parts of the LRTP, BMP, TMP, and CMP, which all place emphasis on a multi-modal transportation system for improvement. As more projects are developed and analyzed with this approach, we anticipate that Rhode Island will become a more user-friendly and equitable State as it pertains to transportation and mobility.

Climate change is also an important part of making transportation investment decisions and can be the driver of many projects that make up a comprehensive plan to address the emissions that are attributable to the transportation sector. Under the 2021 Act on Climate, the state will develop a plan to incrementally reduce climate emissions to net-zero by 2050. The plan will be updated every 5 years and will address areas such as environmental injustices, public health inequities and a fair employment transition as fossil-fuel jobs are replaced by green energy jobs. This is a nascent law that may drive change in the STIP analysis. Your feedback is helpful and will be considered as changes to business operations mandated by the legislation are discussed.

The FFY 2022-2031 STIP is financially constrained and the State has a limited amount of funding resources. The state agrees that our transportation system requires further investment in sidewalks and public transportation. In the event that additional federal funding is received, there may be an opportunity to accelerate project timelines on many of the bicycle and pedestrian projects. Please note that the proposed Active Transportation Program accounts for \$180M of funding, which represents approximately 6% of all capital project expenditures over the ten year STIP window (FFY2022-2031). In addition, several projects in other programs (Bridge, Pavement, Traffic Safety, etc.) include components of active transportation. Some of these projects include major capital projects such as the 6/10 Project, which includes a bike path connection between the Washington Secondary and Woonasquatucket River Greenway. Those projects, including RIDOT Traffic Safety's Intersection & Crosswalks projects, are \*not\* factored into the 6% figure. The STIP also includes improvements to and extensions of numerous bike paths throughout the state. For example, TIPID 9002 includes a nearly 5-mile extension of the Trestle Trail bike path from Summit Village in Coventry to the Connecticut State Line. Not only is the Washington Secondary Bike Path scheduled for extension under TIPID 5215, but the 6/10 Project includes bike amenities to link the path to the Woonasquatucket River Greenway. Said Greenway is programmed for additional enhancements under TIPID 5178. Improvements to other paths, including but not limited to the Aquidneck Island Bikeway (5161) or Blackstone River Bikeway (5319), are also scheduled.

TIPID 5005 in the Active Transportation Program entails the replacement of the East Bay Bike Path Bridges. TIPID 5005, the East Bay Bike Path Bridges is a top priority for RIDOT, which has begun installing a safe, temporary bike path as the agency continues to work with design consultants to find a way to reduce the cost of replacing both bridges which are severely deteriorated. This project will commence at the start of the new FFY 2022-2031 STIP window. The Federal Fiscal Year 2022 begins October 1, 2021.

In addition, the FFY 2022-2031 STIP is informed by new mapping analytical tools being used by the Rhode Island Department of Transportation and RI Division of Statewide Planning. Thanks to such tools, RIDOT has identified over 2.5 million square feet of sidewalks that will be repaired or newly constructed as part of the projects in this STIP. This figure will most certainly increase over time, as the effort to measure and map these improvements is still underway.

Incidentally, many of the major capital projects Grow Smart would reallocate money from that have been designed to reduce congestion, gain economic advantage, and achieve state of good repair, are funded with federal discretionary monies, which cannot be reallocated to other program areas of the STIP. Federal discretionary grants are awarded to projects that meet specific federal criteria and the major capital projects fit the criteria under the discretionary grant programs from which the money flows. For more information, please refer to the STIP Resources section within Section 1 of the 2022-2031 STIP.

The FFY 2022-2031 STIP is fiscally constrained, but many projects include improvements prioritized in Transit Forward 2040. In addition, TIP ID 7151, Transit Master Plan Investments, sets aside \$64.9 million over the next ten years to fund the development of additional TMP projects with a focus on project development in the constrained years. The out-years provide larger sums for implementation of fleet enhancements, transit corridor expansion, state match funds to support future federal discretionary grants, or other projects to be developed. If additional funding becomes available, there could be opportunities to increase funding for public transit initiatives. Improving access to transit is a key objective of this STIP due to the benefits that your comment mentioned. The state is excited to explore new, additional ways of expanding transportation opportunities for transit users and your continued advocacy on the subject matters.

Public transportation is a cornerstone of Rhode Island's transportation infrastructure. RIDOT's Transit Program represents \$260M in expenditure in the FFY 2022-2031 STIP. This is an investment that will help to reduce congestion on roadways, and by extension limit greenhouse gas emissions.

Regarding TIPID 5204, Kennedy Plaza, the creation of a multi-hub system brings many benefits to the transit network, including alleviating congestion at a single-hub and allowing for the physical improvement of pedestrian and transit amenities at several locations. Operationally, the multi-hub system is also not expected to negatively impact bus service to and from Kennedy Plaza. Your concerns and comments regarding Kennedy Plaza are heard, noted, and appreciated. The project seeks to improve the existing system for current riders and create opportunities for future expansion of ridership, connect businesses and aid in the continued growth and service of Providence's neighborhoods. Kennedy Plaza will be maintained as a key station within the Multi Hub concept and the TMP calls for East-West as well as North-South

high capacity transit service that will connect multiple hubs in downtown Providence with surrounding areas and neighborhoods. The TMP emphasized the utility of mobility hubs throughout the state to connect high capacity transit and work on the Multi Hub project is being coordinated between RIDOT, RIPTA, and the City of Providence.

We appreciate your feedback on the TEBA and have taken your suggestions into account. Rhode Island has worked with our federal partners in the past to develop and improve the equity benefit analysis to this point and we will continue to do so in order to improve the outcome of transportation investments on minority, low-income, and underserved communities including the effects on air quality, mobility, and greenhouse gas emissions. Your concerns are our concerns in respect to equal treatment of all Rhode Island citizens and developing and designing a future that has residual benefits and reduces the burden of vehicle emissions and transportation infrastructure on human health.

### **O-8: Ocean State Center for Independent Living,**

**City:** Warwick

**Submit Date:** 06/17/2021

**Submit Method:** Website

#### **Comment O-8-1**

To the Members of the Transportation Advisory Committee

Transportation & the accessibility of sidewalks, pedestrian crossing devices etc. are critical for Rhode Islanders with disabilities to independently travel around the state. Therefore, Ocean State Center for Independent Living (OSCIL) as the independent Living Center in the state with the mission of promoting independence & community involvement for individuals with disabilities appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

First, OSCIL supports RI DOT's on-going efforts to install accessible pedestrian crossing devices, curb cuts, etc. throughout the state and has experienced positive results in particular when requesting that an accessible pedestrian crossing device be installed near our office.

Next, because RIPTA's Paratransit and fixed route transportation are primary sources of transportation for individuals with disabilities, we support RIPTA's proposal to maintain a fleet of accessible vehicles for the Paratransit program. Expanding areas served by Flex routes would also encourage more riders. OSCIL strongly encourages RIPTA to directly involve members of its Accessible Transportation Committee (ATAC) for feedback on the accessibility of paratransit vehicles to be purchased and to participate in sensitivity training for all RIPTA drivers.

OSCIL is strongly opposed to RI DOT's plan to spread out bus hubs through out downtown Providence. Increased ride times, and bus transfers will make the fixed route unnecessarily more challenging for passengers with disabilities to navigate, given their varying levels of mobility, sensory or cognitive abilities. It is OSCIL's opinion that increased rapid bus lines,

and expanding weekend and evening service as well as bus hubs in underserved regions of the state will improve public transportation for all Rhode Islanders.

Thank you for your attention to our comments, and feel free to be in contact with further questions.

**Response to O-8-1**

Thank you for your support of ongoing RIDOT efforts to install accessible pedestrian amenities and noting the positive results made through these efforts.

Comments regarding RIPTA's Paratransit and fixed route transportation are noted. OSCIL's participation on the ATAC are appreciated along with matters that come before that committee. As has been the practice, RIPTA will continue to solicit feedback from the ATAC on matters concerning accessibility and transit service. Customer service is also a major goal of RIPTA and driver training is an important aspect of maintaining sound transit operations.

Please see the response above regarding the Providence Multi-Hub project. The creation of a multi-hub system will bring many benefits to the transit network, in particular, allowing for the physical improvement of pedestrian and transit amenities at several locations in downtown Providence that will enhance accessibility. Operationally, the multi-hub system is also not expected to negatively impact bus service to and from Kennedy Plaza as 99.8% of the current passengers that take a 1-seat ride to Kennedy Plaza and downtown Providence will continue to do so once the project is in place. Proper wayfinding and signage will be installed to improve navigation for riders with disabilities.

OSCIL's support of expanded bus service, including expanding weekend and evening service as well as bus hubs in underserved areas is noted and OSCIL's participation in the public comment phase of preparing the STIP is appreciated.



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND  
Department of Administration  
**DIVISION OF STATEWIDE PLANNING**  
**STATE PLANNING COUNCIL**  
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Providence, RI 02908-5870  
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**TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
PUBLIC NOTICE**

**Draft State Transportation Improvement Program FFY 2022 -2031**

The Rhode Island State Planning Council's Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) is accepting written comments on the proposed Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2022-2031 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for the State of Rhode Island.

The Division of Statewide Planning, in partnership with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) and the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA), have prepared a draft of the FFY 2022-2031 Rhode Island STIP. The STIP is the program of transportation projects the State of Rhode Island intends to implement using U.S. Department of Transportation funds, state funds, and other funding sources.

The STIP is prepared every four years and includes the following RIDOT programs: Bridge, Pavement, Traffic Safety, Transit, Active Transportation, Corridor Projects, Major Capital Projects, NHTSA, Stormwater and the following RIPTA programs: Transit Capital, Transit Services, and Transit Support Operations. The FFY 2022-2031 STIP covers the four fiscally constrained years (FFY 2022-2025) to meet federal requirements and also anticipates projects for 2026 to 2031, to provide a more comprehensive perspective on the projects moving through development into implementation.

The Draft State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) FFY 2022-2031 and online project mapping dashboard can be reviewed at <http://www.planning.ri.gov/planning-areas/transportation/tip-2022-2031.php> or at the offices of the Division of Statewide Planning between 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. (Note: due to pandemic protocols, please call (401) 222-7901 to make an appointment for in-person review.)

The public comment period for the Draft FFY 2022-2031 STIP starts on June 10, 2021. Written comments can be submitted at <https://planning.ri.commentinput.com/?id=4pKAZ>.

The TAC will also accept public comments on the Draft FFY 2022-2031 STIP at two public hearings scheduled for:

Tuesday, June 29, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.  
Narragansett Town Hall  
25 Fifth Avenue, Narragansett, RI  
Council Chambers

Wednesday, June 30, 2021 at 4:00 p.m.  
RI Department of Administration  
One Capitol Hill, Providence RI  
Conference Room 2A, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

Or Join from a PC, Mac, iPad, iPhone or Android device  
Please click this URL to join.

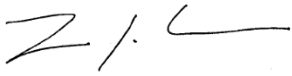
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The two public hearings will include the same informational presentation at the start. All persons may present their views on these items in person or through a representative at the TAC public hearings referenced above. All comments on the STIP, both oral and written) must be received by 4:00 PM on July 12, 2021.

The public meeting locations are accessible to individuals with disabilities. Any individual requiring a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in these meetings should contact Thomas Mannoek, Ph.D. at 401-222-6377 (voice) as soon as possible. Individuals requesting foreign language translation services should contact Benny Bergantino at (401) 222-1755 at least five (5) business days prior to the scheduled start of a meeting. Public transit schedule information for the public hearings is available from RIPTA at (401) 781-9400 or [www.ripta.com](http://www.ripta.com)



Linsey J. Callaghan  
Secretary, Transportation Advisory Committee  
June 10, 2021



