



Section 4: Regionally Significant Projects

Funded Regionally Significant Projects

Regionally significant projects are defined by USDOT as a transportation project (other than an exempt project) that is on a facility which serves regional transportation needs (such as access to and from the area outside of the region, major activity centers in the region, major planned developments such as new retail malls, sports complexes, etc., or transportation terminals as well as most terminals themselves) and would normally be included in the modeling of a metropolitan area's transportation network, including at a minimum all principal arterial highways and all fixed guideway transit facilities that offer an alternative to regional highway travel.

Federal regulations require that the STIP shall contain all regionally significant projects requiring an action by the FHWA or the FTA whether or not the projects are to be funded with 23 U.S.C. Chapters 1 and 2 or title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 funds (e.g. addition of an interchange to the Interstate System with state, local, and/or private funds, and congressionally designated projects not funded under title 23 U.S.C. or title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53). For informational and conformity purposes, the STIP shall include all regionally significant projects proposed to be funded with federal funds other than those administered by the FHWA or the FTA, as well as all regionally significant projects to be funded with non-federal funds.



Interstate 95 Northbound Viaduct

In 2019, RIDOT was awarded a \$60.4 million federal Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grant award to rebuild the I-95 Northbound Viaduct. The I-95 Providence Viaduct Northbound is the third most traveled section of interstate in New England, carrying over 200,000 vehicles daily and serves as a critical link in the National Highway Freight Network. Built in 1964, the Viaduct’s structural deficiencies threaten critical infrastructure and the environment beneath it, including the Woonasquatucket River, Amtrak’s Northeast Corridor rail lines, city roads, and I-95’s Exit 22’s interchange ramps. In addition to the imminent need for structural improvements, the interchanges between I-95, Routes 6 and 10, and Route 146 are increasingly congested and present troublesome points of conflict for drivers. The proposed project will transform the I-95 Northbound section of I-95 in Providence, as RIDOT looks to reconstruct the Viaduct’s 6 bridges, rehabilitate 5 bridges, and construct 3 new bridge structures, along with the reconfiguration of a series of ramps to separate conflicting lanes of traffic. The construction of a new collector distributor road will also eliminate

Route 6/10 Redesign/Reconstruction

In 2018, RIDOT began work on the \$343.0 million Route 6/10 Interchange project. The project involves nine bridge replacements including constructing the “missing movement” that will allow Route 10 northbound traffic to access Route 6 west without traveling through Providence’s Olneyville neighborhood. In addition to State of Good Repair efforts, the project creates 1.4 miles of new bike path and opens more than four acres of developable land in Providence.



merging conflicts. The new configuration is expected to significantly improve traffic safety by reducing the number of crashes in the area from its current average of 200 annually. The project is also expected to reduce backup from the Route 6/10 approach by up to 96 percent. In 2020, RIDOT marked the start of construction on the \$265 million project.

Pawtucket/Central Falls Train Station

The Pawtucket/Central Falls Train Station will be an infill commuter rail train station located along the Northeast Corridor in between Providence Station and South Attleboro Station (MA). Service on the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority - MBTA's Providence Line will provide northerly connections to Boston and southerly connections to Providence Station, TF Green Airport, and Wickford Junction.

In 2016, RIDOT was awarded a \$13.1 million federal Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) award towards the \$40 million Pawtucket/Central Falls Train Station. In 2020, RIDOT continued moving forward on the design of the project including submissions for track, catenary, signal, RIPTA Bus Hub, and the Transit Emphasis Corridor. Construction is ongoing at this time, as the 100 percent engineering design plan set nears completion and RIDOT and Amtrak leasing arrangements are scheduled to be finalized in 2021.

Route 146 Reconstruction

This \$150 million project has several major components, one of the largest of which is the construction of an overpass at the intersection of Route 146 at Sayles Hill Road. Presently, Route 146 is entirely access controlled except for a short stretch at Sayles Hill Road, where there is a major signalized intersection. The traffic signal introduces excessive delays during the morning and afternoon peak hours, and the new overpass will significantly improve congestion on Route 146 while still maintaining access to Sayles Hill Road and local businesses through collector-distributor type roads. Other project components include but are not limited to bridge rehabilitation, bridge replacement, improving the weave area at the Rt. 99/Rt. 146 and I-295 south exit, redesigning the Rt. 146/146A interchange to a diverging diamond interchange (DDI), installation of wrong way driving detection at select ramps, implementing bus-on-shoulder signs and pavement markings from Mineral Spring Avenue to I-95, installation of high friction surface treatment at select ramps, enhance the weigh station on Rt. 146 south by adding weigh-in-motion (WIM) technology, extending RIDOT's fiber optic network for intelligent transportation systems/traffic monitoring from I-295 to the Massachusetts' State line, and pavement resurfacing from I-295 to the Massachusetts' State line. In 2020, RIDOT was notified that this project had been awarded \$65 million from



FHWA’s INFRA Grant program. RIDOT has started preliminary design work for the project and anticipates being able to start construction by Spring 2022.

Washington Bridge Rehabilitation and Redevelopment

The Washington Bridge is a paired bridge carrying I-195 over the Seekonk River from Providence to East Providence. This project will rehabilitate the bridge superstructure atop a newly rehabilitated substructure; restripe the I-195 westbound mainline between Broadway in East Providence and the Washington Bridge to maintain 4 lanes throughout the corridor; remove the Gano Street off-ramp in Providence, eliminate a conflicting weave which generates significant congestion issues; and add an exit ramp connecting I-195 Westbound to Waterfront Drive in East Providence. In 2019, a \$25 million BUILD grant was secured by RIDOT to support the \$70 million Washington Bridge Rehabilitation and Redevelopment design/build project. In April 2020, RIDOT announced an upcoming Request for Proposals (RFP) and scheduled work to start in 2020 followed by the awarding of the design/build contract during the Summer of 2020.

Route 37 and I-295 Interchange Safety Improvements

In September 2020, RIDOT was awarded a \$21 million BUILD grant for the Route 37 and I-295 interchange improvements which will address the safety, congestion, and weaving concerns in the interchange area and along I-295 North up to Route 6. Five of the six bridge structures at this interchange will be replaced while the other is rehabilitated. A seventh new bridge structure will be added to eliminate the current on-ramp traffic merge into high speed traffic. The area along I-295 North from Route 37 to Route 6, commonly referred to as the “Cranston Canyon,” will have a third lane added to aid in the heavy congestion, on-ramp merges, and provide for trucks to move slower up the steep grade through the area also known as a climbing lane. Rebuilding the interchange and eliminating weaves would greatly reduce traffic congestion and significantly improve safety.

Smarter, Simpler Roads for the Newport Innovation Corridor (Pell Bridge Ramps Phase 2)

This project will reconstruct the Pell Bridge approach ramps in Newport to improve traffic circulation, reduce queuing on the Pell Bridge and reconnect neighborhoods



which are currently segmented by the current highway infrastructure. With the realignment of the approach roads and removal of excess transportation infrastructure, the project will also spur economic development as it frees up parcels of land for new development opportunities. In 2020, a \$20 million BUILD grant was awarded to RIDOT to support the project's design and construction. It is anticipated that advertising for the project with initial construction activities will commence in Spring 2021.

Amtrak Rail Platform at Warwick Station (T.F. Green Airport)

This project would expand existing the Warwick/T.F. Green Airport Rail Station which opened in 2010. The current TF Green Rail Station includes a single high-level platform that supports MBTA commuter rail services to the Airport from points North including Providence and Boston and to the Wickford Junction Station to the South. For this project, RIDOT and Amtrak have proposed expanding the station with additional track and platform capacity to accommodate intercity Amtrak rail service. The project is estimated to cost \$180 million. In 2018, a \$2.8 million Federal Rail Administration (FRA) Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grant was awarded to RIDOT to begin preliminary engineering at the station.

Partially Funded Regionally Significant Projects

The following projects are funded in the FFY 2022-2031 STIP, but they may require additional funding to be completed. These projects may be candidates for future discretionary grant applications.

Route 4 and Interstate 95 Interchange and Deferred Quonset Connector Ramps

This project would provide the missing roadway movements at the I-95 and Route 4 interchange: I-95 North to Route 4 South and Route 4 North to I-95 South. Currently, traffic traveling I-95 North must exit the highway and utilize local roads in order to access Route 4 South. Similarly, Route 4 North traffic must utilize local roads to access I-95 South. This project involves construction of a series of flyovers and highway interchanges to provide a direct bidirectional connection and is intended to reduce congestion along Division Street and Route 2 and improve travel times for both freeway and local traffic. This project is estimated to cost \$90 million.

In addition to the larger Route 4 and Interstate 95 Interchange project, the final component involves the completion of three ramps from the Route 403 extension into the Quonset Business Park and West Davisville industrial area. Quonset Business Park traffic is now being re-routed onto the local Devil's Foot Road and Post Road in North Kingstown. The ramps were deferred due to lack of funding, but as development increases, traffic is projected to increase by 70 percent. Completion of the ramps would improve local safety and traffic flow, improve access to the businesses on Post Road, and allow faster, more direct access to the businesses in the Quonset Business Park. In 2020, this project was awarded a BUILD grant for \$4 million to advance a design study for constructing full freeway to freeway access between I-95 and Route 4, and from the Quonset Business Park to Route 4 via Route 403.

Route 6 Corridor Improvements

This project would rehabilitate three major highway bridges along US-6 in Providence and Johnston, resurface US-6 in both directions between RI-10 and I-295, and make some minor geometry modifications to improve traffic safety in the area. With preliminary estimates at \$48 million, this project would bring a critical freight corridor up to a state of good repair and complete the transformation of US-6 in the urban core. This project will be partially funded in the STIP, and RIDOT anticipates submitting a discretionary grant application to fund the remaining portion.

East Avenue Corridor Improvements

This project would replace or rehabilitate the East Avenue and East Avenue West bridges, which carry RI-113 over I-95 and I-295 in Warwick. Pavement resurfacing and sidewalk enhancements on the length of RI-113 will also be included in the project, along with the installation of a dedicated left-turn lane and other safety improvements at the entrance to the Knight Campus of CCRI. Estimated at \$53 million, this project would bring a significant portion of the state's poor bridge deck area up to a state of good repair and improve public safety on a major arterial in the heart of Rhode Island. This project will be partially funded in the STIP, and RIDOT anticipates submitting a discretionary grant application to fund the remaining portion.

Unfunded Regionally Significant Projects

The following projects have been classified as regionally significant projects according to the USDOT definition. There is not funding available for these projects at this time, but discretionary funding may be pursued should the opportunity arise.

Route 4 Traffic Light Elimination

This project involves constructing full grade separated interchanges along Route 4 at three locations, West Allenton Road, Oakhill Road, and Tower Hill Road / Route 1. This project would eliminate the three traffic lights which are points of heavy congestion along the route especially in the summer. This project is estimated to cost between \$50 million to \$100 million.

Create Access from ProvPort to I-95 Southbound and Roadway Reconstruction

The current condition of this project involves travel on reconstructed local roads in Providence to access I-95 South from the Port of Providence. The current configuration requires use of local roads with truck turning radius issues. Some possible solutions could be adding direct access to I-95 South, identifying alternate routes, and adding pavement/restriping to improve turning radii. In addition, this project would improve marine port access and improve community traffic concerns. The estimated cost of this project is \$45 million.

Rhode Island-Boston Regional Rail

RIDOT and the MBTA have a shared interest in improving passenger rail operations between Rhode Island and Boston. This includes increasing the frequency of service and reducing the travel time of each trip. Due to the complexity and cost of investments, a phased approach for improvement has been developed. First, RIDOT is planning to implement a cross-honor fare agreement with Amtrak that will enable MBTA Zone 8+ passholders to ride select Amtrak Northeast Regional trains at no extra charge. This will provide more frequent service to MBTA passholders, as well as access to faster and

more comfortable trains, and fill gaps in during off-peak service. Secondly, RIDOT is seeking opportunities to add additional trips in the form of express trains. This requires identification and potential procurement of rolling stock and also a modification to existing MBTA and Amtrak schedules. Lastly, RIDOT is committed to working with MBTA to advance the Regional Rail goals identified in MBTA's Rail Vision plan. This includes frequent, electrified commuter rail service on the Providence Line. While most of the corridor is wired for existing electric service, improvements are necessary at Attleboro, TF Green, and Wickford Junction.

Bus Rapid Transit/Light Rail Improvements on two corridors: Providence-CCRI Warwick via TF Green, Central Falls-CCRI Warwick

Light Rail Transit (LRT) is electrified rail service that operates in a variety of urban environments including completely exclusive rights-of-way, in exclusive lanes on roadways, and in some cases in mixed traffic. It serves high volume corridors at higher speeds than local bus services. The development of light rail and/or bus rapid transit (BRT) would make transit in the highest demand areas much more attractive by making it frequent, fast, and reliable. Light rail or BRT – with the choice to be determined based on more detailed project development work – would be developed in Rhode Island's key north-south corridor between Central Falls and the Community Collage of Rhode Island's (CCRI) Warwick Campus via Pawtucket and Providence. BRT would also be developed between Providence and CCRI Warwick via TF Green Airport. The estimated capital cost of this conceptual project is \$2.02 billion for a combination of LRT/BRT or \$190.5 million for all BRT.

Rapid Bus Improvements

Improvements to the Rapid Bus network would have multiple bus routes serving Metropolitan Providence with transit priority elements and an anticipated 10-minute service frequency. The southern portion of the R-Line, as well as six other rapid bus lines would be developed as part of this network. New rapid bus routes would run on the following corridors: Elmwood Ave/TF Green Airport; Broadway/Manton; Chalkstone Avenue; Beverage Hill Avenue and Attleboro-Pocasset/Dyer Ave; and Cranston Street. The estimated capital cost of this project is \$111.5 million.

Regional Rapid Bus Improvements

Creation of a Regional Rapid Bus network would enhance connections between Providence, Woonsocket, Newport, and South County by providing transit priority elements such as queue-jump lanes, transit signal priority, and bus-on-shoulder operations to bypass traffic congestion along key regional routes. Four existing routes would be upgraded to Regional Rapid Bus: 14 West Bay, 54 Lincoln-Woonsocket, 60 Providence-Newport, and 66 URI-Galilee. The estimated capital investment for regional rapid bus implementation is \$155.2 million.

