



## Providence Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Jorge O. Elorza, Mayor

### **Staff Report: Update on State Bicycle Master Plan (For Action)**

*Presented at September 4, 2018 BPAC meeting*

#### **Project Background**

The State is nearing completion of its first Bicycle Master Plan, and the City wishes to inform BPAC of the contents of the plan.

Part of the state's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), which "serves as the foundation for the development of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)" which provides funding for the state's biggest transportation projects. The public outreach for the plan included 1300 online survey responses, 400 comments on interactive online maps, and numerous in-person public meetings and presentations to community groups.

The plan inventories existing conditions including existing facilities, funded projects, current ridership counts, and a summary of existing bike culture. It then evaluates network needs and proposes candidate routes for filling network gaps. Finally, it puts forward policy recommendations and an implementation roadmap.

#### **Summary of Draft Plan**

The draft plan establishes the following objectives:

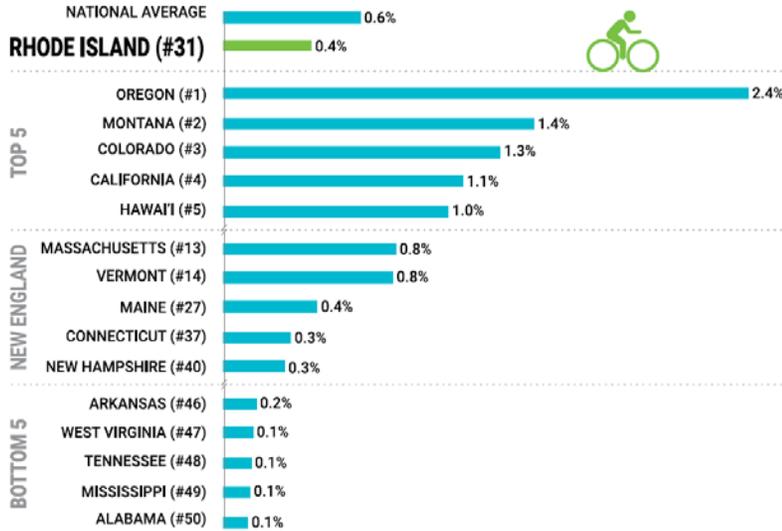
- Provide a dedicated bicycle facility within 1/4 mile of all state residents.
- Connect State's parks and beaches with an "all ages and abilities" facility
- Make RI the first state in the US to have a continuous off-road East Coast Greenway route.
- Establish dedicated local and statewide funding streams for bicycle and Complete Streets projects
- Adopt a policy that requires consideration of bicycle accommodations in relevant publicly-funded roadway projects as a default
- Adopt a bicycle Level of Traffic Stress Analysis methodology as the standard tool for evaluating levels of bicycle accommodation within on-road bicycle networks.
- Invest in bicycle facilities in traditionally underserved communities.
- Eliminate speed-related bicycle crashes through increased use of traffic calming facilities and motor vehicle speed enforcement.
- Support third-party bicycle safety and education efforts—especially the Smart Cycling curriculum—with funding and organizational capacity.
- Develop a statewide driver re-education campaign aimed at improving behavior around bicyclists and understanding of bicyclists' rights on the road. This effort should lead to a revised version of the Rhode Island driver's manual and driver's exam.
- Create bicycle parking at all State-owned buildings, with at least of 50% secure and covered.



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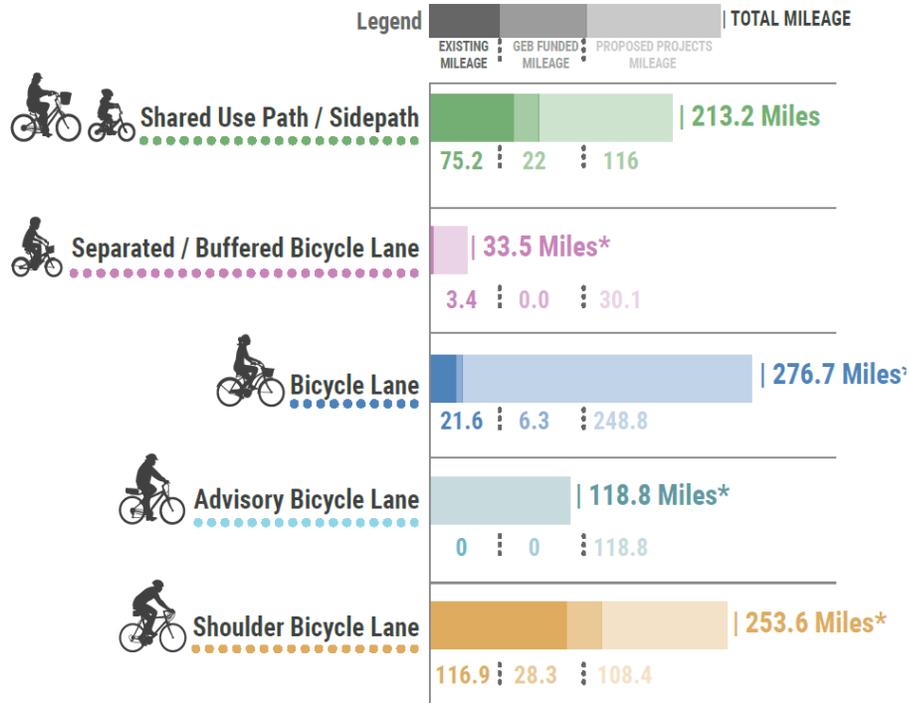
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2012-2016  
Bicycle Commute Share



SOURCE: TABLE B08301, 5-YEAR ESTIMATES, AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY (2012-2016)

## SUMMARY OF EXISTING, FUNDED, AND CANDIDATE BIKEWAYS



\*Assumes bike facility accommodates travel in both directions, except on one-way streets.

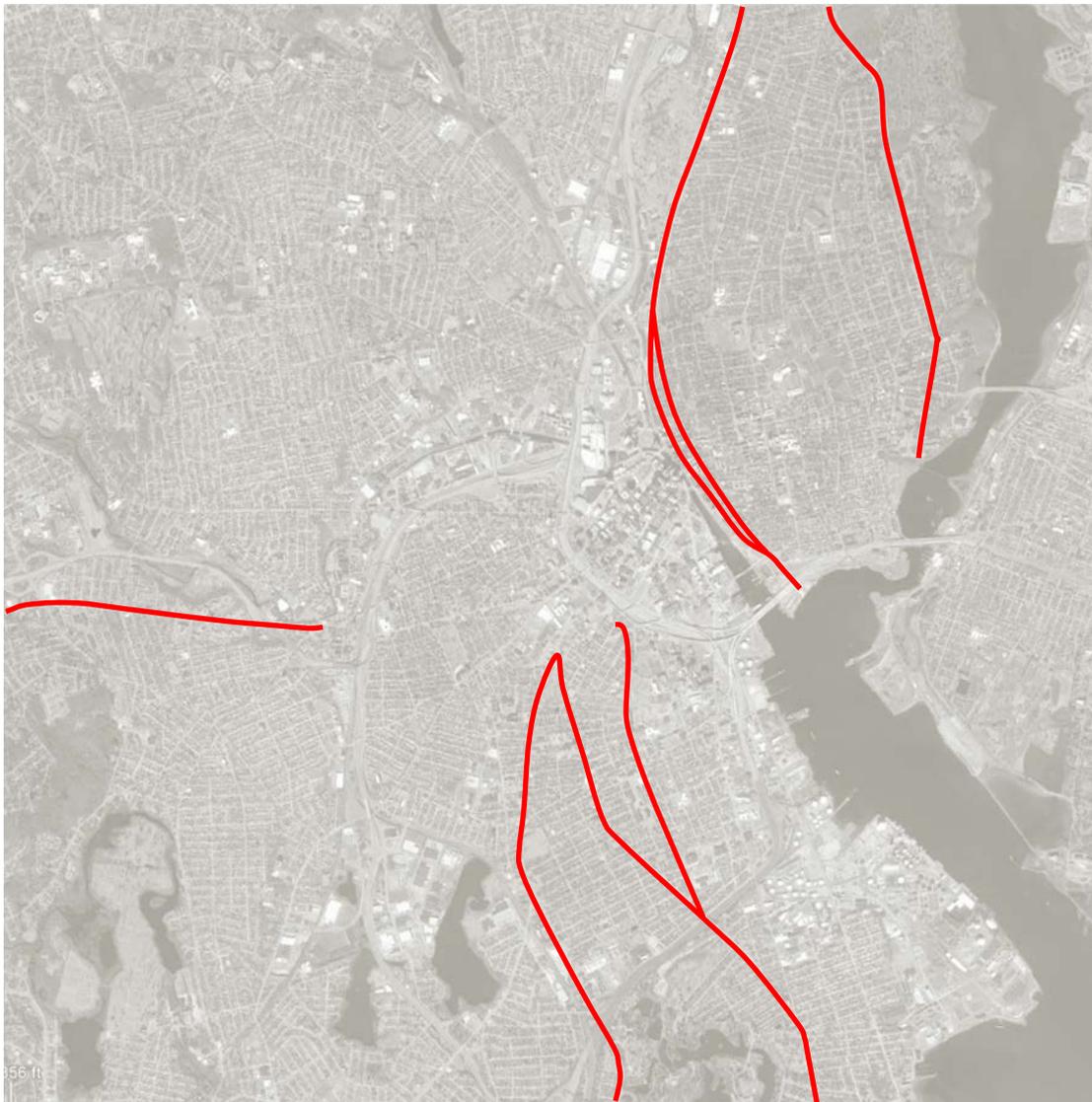


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Through a quantitative formula applied to each candidate route, the draft plan identifies the top 5 priority corridors statewide, all of which include Providence:

1. Elmwood Avenue - Broad Street Corridor (Providence)
2. Hartford Avenue Corridor - Westminster Street to Washington Street (Providence, Johnston)
3. Butler Avenue - Broad Street Corridor (Pawtucket, Central Falls, Providence)
4. Main Street - Benefit Street Corridor (Providence, Pawtucket)
5. Broad Street - Prairie Avenue Corridor (Providence)





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### Policy Recommendations

**Winter Bicycling:** “To promote bicycling as everyday transportation for a large segment of the population, winter maintenance of paths and on-street bikeways must be taken as seriously as snow removal on State and local roadways.”

### **Funding Recommendations:**

- Ensure that all contingency funds in the 2018-2027 TIP remain programmed into bicycle-related projects
- Increase the overall share of funding committed to TAP projects in the State's current and future TIP (2.4% is not adequate to significantly improve bicycling conditions in the state)
- Work with the State Legislature to float a Green Economy Bond every two years with \$10M as a starting point for shared-use path and bicycle-related projects
- Create a consistent and predictable funding stream for bicycle facility capital expenditures and maintenance

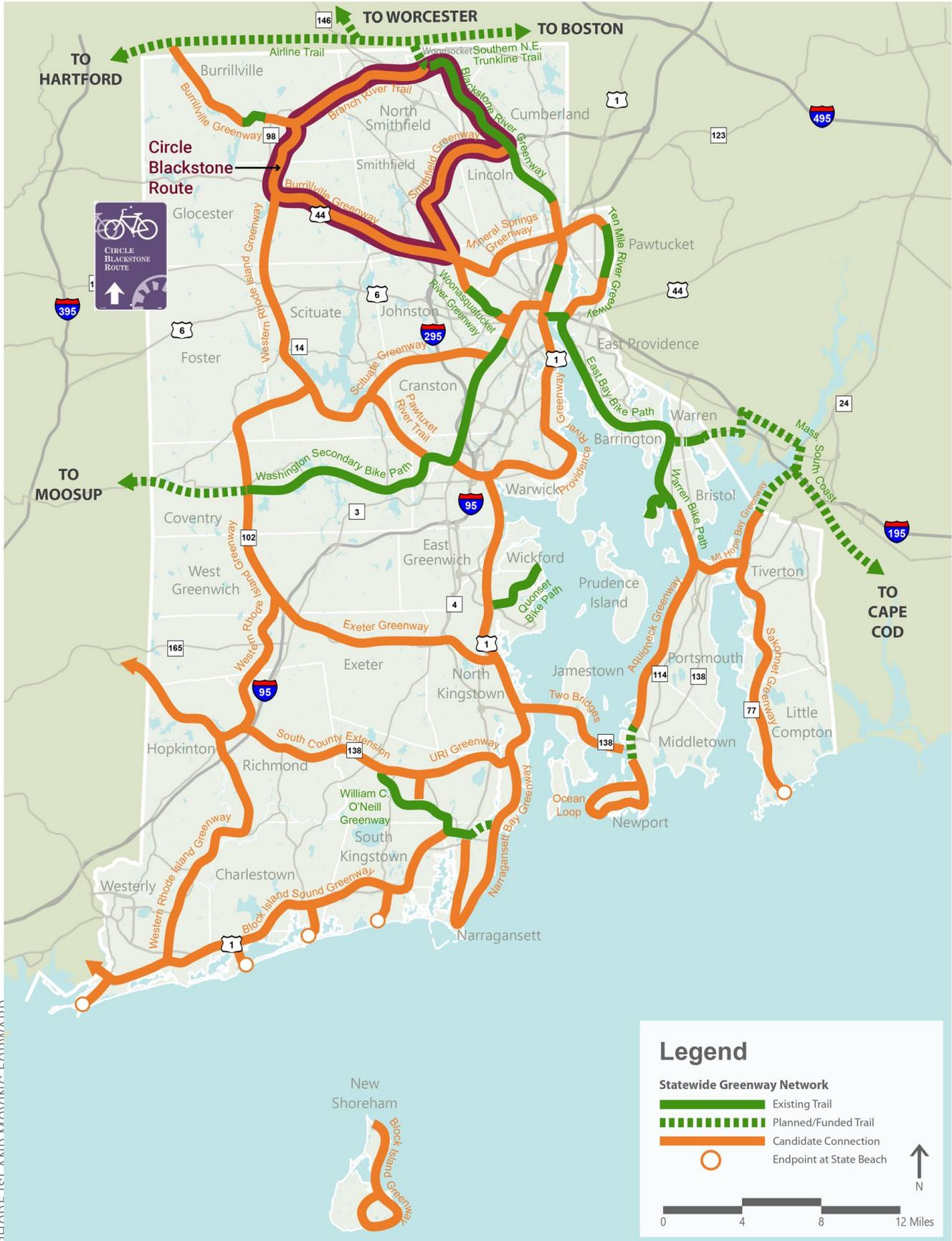
### **Funding Sources:**

- Dedicating a modest increase to the State's current \$0.34/gallon gasoline tax
- Creating a new tax related to total vehicle miles traveled (being explored in other cities and states)
- Consider altering the state law so that municipalities can establish local fees on ridehailing services
- Exploring potential fees from ride-hailing services and from motorists entering into congested areas during peak hours
- Reserving a share of the revenue from future automated traffic enforcement
- Reallocating existing transportation funding to create a dedicated source for bicycle projects

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Respectfully submitted by Alex Ellis.

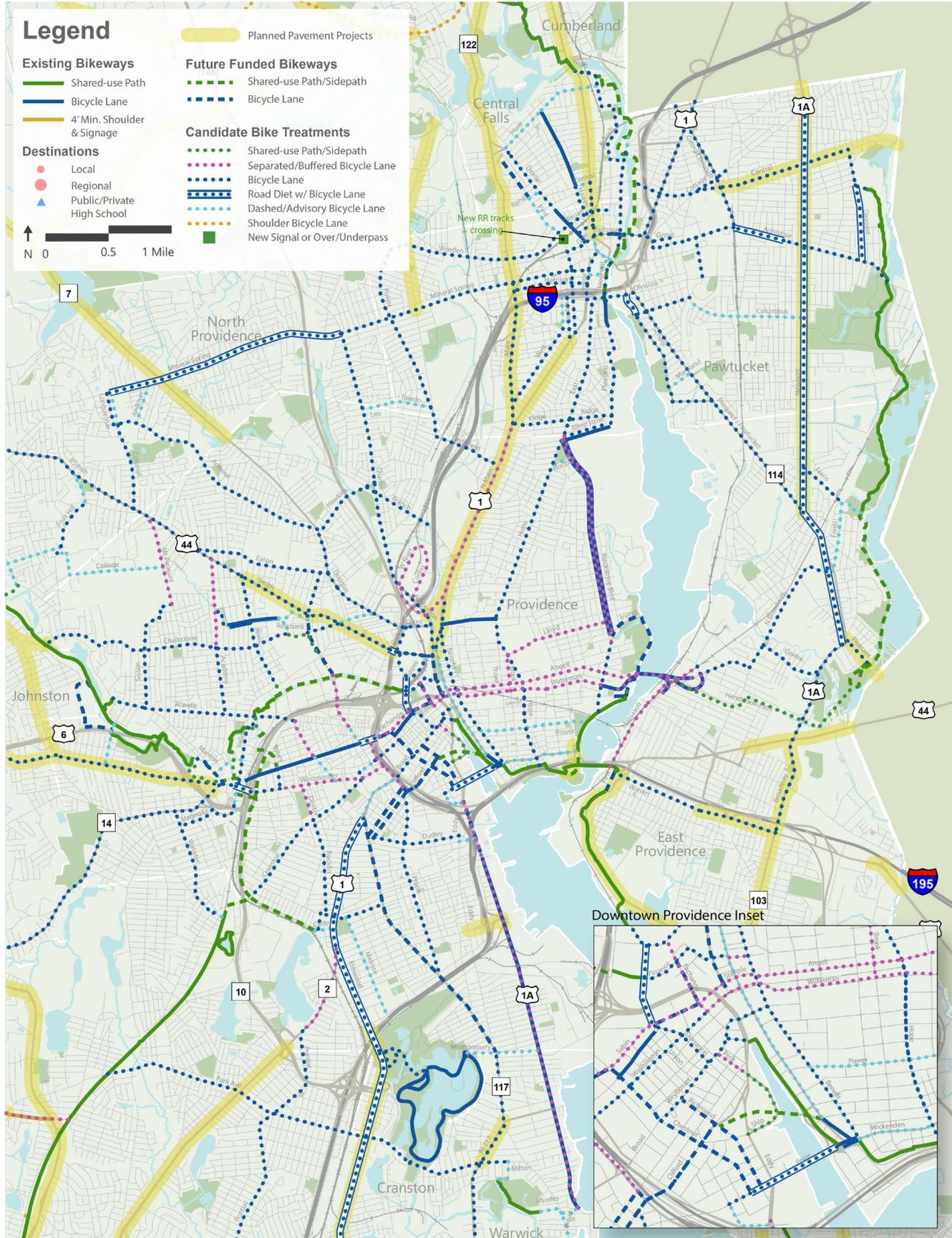
# A Long Term Vision for the Statewide Greenway Network



PLANNING AND MOVING FORWARD



### Metro Providence Candidate Bikeway Network



To view a scalable map click here: [online map](#)



## Education

POLICY OR PROGRAM	NEED FOR REVISION	RECOMMENDATION	AGENCY LEAD
RI Driver Training	There is currently no communication between safety professionals and RI's driver training schools	Require driving teachers to be familiar with all laws regarding how to operate around bicyclists and bicycle facilities	RIDOT
Public Safety Campaign	Current public safety program focuses on seat belt use, distracted driving, drunk driving, speeding, and motorcycle safety	Expand to include Vulnerable Road User safety campaign	RIDOT

## Education & Encouragement

POLICY OR PROGRAM	NEED FOR REVISION	RECOMMENDATION	AGENCY LEAD
Section 405 Grant Program	Expansion of bicycle-related parts of this program will lead to a better-educated populace and, in turn, fewer bicycle-related injuries.	Allocate funding for bicycle education, particularly for youth programs to be delivered in schools and recreation centers	RIDOT
Commuter Resource RI Program	More information needed on bicycle-to-bus or bicycle-to-train commutes	Allocate more funds to the program that are specifically dedicated to install more bicycle parking and secure bicycle parking at Park-and-Ride locations and train stations; add video to website demonstrating how to load a bicycle onto the rack at the front of a bus; add information regarding MBTA and Amtrak bicycle policies	RIPTA
Health Equity Zone (HEZ) Program	HEZ Funding will run out in 2018 or 2019.	Renew the program	RIDOH
Rhode Island Tourism website	Bicycle-related information is not immediately obvious; much of the information is outdated	Redesign this section and write new content to highlight Rhode Island's bicycle tourism potential	RI Tourism



Additional funding to the Commuter Resources RI Program will help develop more bicycle/transit multimodal opportunities



Updates to the BikeRI webpage will make it a more useful resource to bicyclists

## Encouragement

POLICY OR PROGRAM	NEED FOR REVISION	RECOMMENDATION	AGENCY LEAD
<b>Bike Valet</b>	<b>Bicycle parking at events is unpredictable</b>	Seek funding that would allow for the expansion of bicycle valet parking at events	Advocacy Organizations (RIBike, Bike Newport)
<b>US Bicycle Route System</b>	<b>Rhode Island is not currently participating</b>	Apply for the current East Coast Greenway route to be RI's section of US Bike Route 1, and coordinate with ConnDOT regarding alignment of a proposed USBR 1A along the coast from New Haven to Providence	RIDOT
<b>Bicycle Network Branding</b>	<b>Lack of consistent signage and branding along many of the State's bikeways and shared-use paths</b>	<p>Create a cohesive signage and branding strategy for the State's key bicycle routes</p> <p>Collaborate with the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council to adapt the branding package they have developed to other parts of the bike network</p>	RIDOT, Tourism
<b>Messaging from the Governor's Office</b>	<b>The current Governor is a strong supporter of bicycle programs and infrastructure and could help provide added visibility to bicycling</b>	<p>Develop an annual announcement from the Office of the Governor during May (Bike Month) documenting progress in making RI a more bicycle-friendly state</p> <p>RIDEM and RIDOT articulate their strong support for bicycling programs and infrastructure at these annual announcements and give updates on their progress</p>	Office of the Governor
<b>Bicycle Parking</b>	<b>More bicycle parking is needed around the state</b>	New funding could help the Steel Yard (current fabricator of many bicycle racks in Rhode Island), expand their operation	RISP
<b>Statewide Bike Map</b>	<b>Current road rating system ("Most Suitable" or "Suitable") is based on criteria not clearly defined.</b>	Use more neutral designations that will be better understood by the public, such as "bicycle lane", "wide shoulder", etc.	RIDOT
<b>Bicycle Tourism</b>	<b>The State currently has no program</b>	Create a marketing campaign encouraging bicyclists to visit from out of state, perhaps in tandem with a significant bicycling event	RI Tourism
<b>Bicycle Delivery</b>	<b>No incentives at present</b>	Create incentives for delivery services operated by bicycle in urban cores, as UPS is currently piloting in Pittsburgh, PA	Local Jurisdictions
<b>Bicycle Commuting by State Employees</b>	<b>Per 2013 State Employee Commuting Plan, 87% of State workers drive alone, and 5% bicycle, walk, or work at home. The current policy of providing free parking to State workers encourages greater car use.</b>	Institute parking cash-out program, safe & secure storage for bicycles, shower and locker facilities, and on-site repair stations	RISP



## Encouragement (continued)

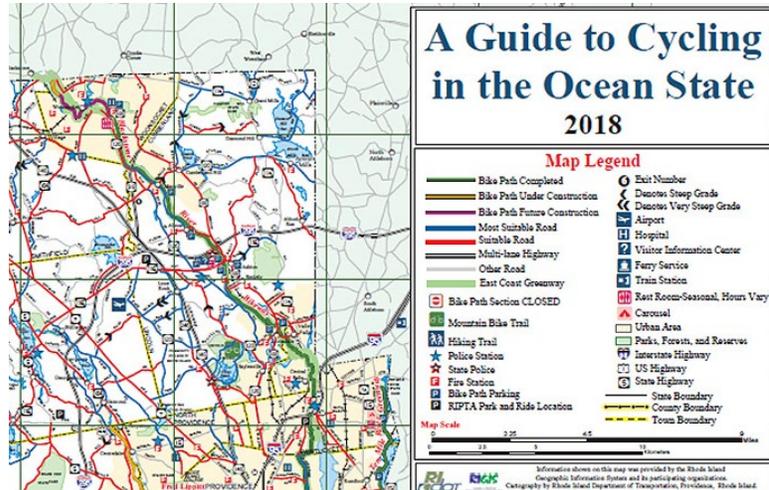
POLICY OR PROGRAM	NEED FOR REVISION	RECOMMENDATION	AGENCY LEAD
<b>RIPTA Folding Bicycle Policy</b>	<b>Added clarity</b>	Make it clear to both customers and drivers that folding bicycles, while folded, are to be treated as customer baggage. Amtrak and the BMTA both have clear language on this matter that RIPTA may wish to simply adopt and post to RIPTA.com	RIPTA
<b>Commuter Rail Bicycle Policy</b>	<b>Full-size bikes not permitted on MBTA trains south of Providence during peak hours, even as ridership is very low</b>	Peak-time bicycle restrictions on MBTA trains should be eliminated between Providence and Wickford Junction until such time that ridership levels are high enough that storage of bicycles on the coaches becomes a safety hazard	MBTA

## Engineering

POLICY OR PROGRAM	NEED FOR REVISION	RECOMMENDATION	AGENCY LEAD
<b>Maintenance of Bicycle Facilities</b>	<b>Currently, the State lacks a “one-stop shop” where local Public Works personnel can go to find best practices for four-season maintenance of bicycle facilities</b>	Create a web-based reference where maintenance recommendations can be quickly and easily located by local jurisdictions	RIDOT
<b>Project Development Process</b>	<b>Bicycle facilities are not considered as part of the standard RIDOT project development process</b>	Adopt a policy requiring that improvements for bicyclists be considered as part of the project development process by default with justification required when they are not considered	RIDOT
<b>Assessment of Road Bicycle-Friendliness</b>	<b>For state-funded roadway projects, motor vehicle Level of Service (LOS) is given too high a priority relative to bicycling conditions and is generally considered an outdated measure</b>	Adopt the Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress (BLTS) analysis methodology and use for State-funded road projects alongside motor vehicle level of service (LOS) analysis	RIDOT
<b>Pop-up Project Materials Lending Libraries</b>	<b>Local agencies don’t necessarily have the proper materials on hand to set up temporary pop-up projects; such projects effectively communicate the benefits of proposed street design changes</b>	Create “lending libraries” of pop-up materials (flex posts, traffic cones, signs, etc.) to be used by public agencies to demonstrate bike lanes, pedestrian refuge islands, etc. Materials should be stored at each of RIDOT’s seven maintenance facilities to make them more readily available to municipal agencies around the state	RIDOT
<b>State Complete Streets Law</b>	<b>Current law needs to be strengthened to ensure better conditions for Vulnerable Road Users</b>	RIDOT should prepare a Design Policy Memo (DPM) outlining best practice design criteria for bicycle accommodation. MassDOT’s Engineering Directive E-14-001 provides such direction for projects in Massachusetts, and is a good model for a RIDOT DPM.	RIDOT



A web-based reference tool will help create consistent maintenance of bikeway facilities throughout Rhode Island



Changes to RIDOT's statewide bicycle map designations will clarify bicycling conditions along key roadways

## Evaluation

POLICY OR PROGRAM	NEED FOR REVISION	RECOMMENDATION	AGENCY LEAD
Bicycle Counts	Bicycle counts in the state are irregular and few in number	Continue the statewide 21-count program initiated in September with both peak hour and 24-hour counts, and incorporate future count locations in additional areas such as low-income neighborhoods	RIDOT, local agencies
Bicycle Crashes	Data related to crashes involving bicyclists do not include the likely cause of the crash	Develop a new input on crash reports that provides the opportunity for local or State police to record the cause (e.g., hit from behind, right/left hook, dooring, etc.)	RISP, State and local police

## Funding

POLICY OR PROGRAM	NEED FOR REVISION	RECOMMENDATION	AGENCY LEAD
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)	Many planning-level projects are overlooked because they are not "TIP ready"	State provides technical assistance on an annual basis to help communities develop recommendations in advance of TIP schedule	RISP, RIDOT
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)	Many high-quality bicycle projects for which funding is sought via the TIP process are turned down or delayed	Double the amount of funding allocated for bicycle projects derived from the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)	RISP, RIDOT
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)	Funding streams for bicycle projects—TAP and bond funds—aren't sufficient to build and maintain a proper bicycle route network  The TIP does not have a category relating to resurfacing or other roadway projects that offer an opportunity to create bicycle facilities at little or no cost	Create new policy that establishes that a minimum percentage of the State transportation budget to be allocated for bicycle projects, augmenting other sources	RIDOT, Office of the Governor, RISP



## Funding

POLICY OR PROGRAM	NEED FOR REVISION	RECOMMENDATION	AGENCY LEAD
TIP Cost Estimates	Cost estimates for TIP submissions are sometimes unreliable	<p>Strongly encourage or require that a feasibility study and detailed cost estimate be completed as prerequisite to submitting a TIP application</p> <p>Develop a standardized cost estimating template similar to MassDOTs template and provide training/assistance to municipalities</p>	RISP, RIDOT

## Laws Related to Bicycling

POLICY OR PROGRAM	NEED FOR REVISION	RECOMMENDATION	AGENCY LEAD
RI's Complete Streets Law (statewide and municipal)	Current law should be strengthened with adjustments to the language in the statewide policy; more municipalities should consider drafting local policies	<p>§ 31-18-21 should be revised, details can be found in the appendix; Central Falls policy can be used as a template for other cities and towns</p> <p>Provide state matching funds (similar to MA laws) for complete streets action plans and projects for communities with action plans</p>	RIDOT, RISP, Local Agencies
Vulnerable Road User (VRU) law	RI does not have a VRU law, which would provide additional protections for bicyclists, walkers, and others. Nine states have VRU laws, including three others in New England.	<p>Adopt a VRU law. Model language can be found at: <a href="http://bikeleague.org/sites/default/files/Model%20VRU%20Law.pdf">http://bikeleague.org/sites/default/files/Model%20VRU%20Law.pdf</a></p>	RIDOT
Safe Passing Law	R.I. Gen. Laws § 31-15-18 is unenforceable unless the bicyclist has been hit, due to the definition of the term "safe passing" (a distance sufficient to prevent contact with a bicyclist if he or she were to fall into the driver's lane of traffic)	Redefine "safe distance" in the law as not less than three feet on roads with a 35 mph (or lower) speed limit, and not less than four feet on roads where the speed limit is in excess of 35 mph	RIDOT
Regulation of E-bikes and E-assist Bikes	Inconsistent and often confusing bicycle-related definitions in RI state code (§ 31-1-3) makes regulation difficult to discern	Adopt simpler, more clear cut language by starting with the "best practice" regulations supported by People for Bikes and the Bicycle Product Suppliers Association and modifying as needed to fit Rhode Island	RIDOT
Reduced Local Speeds	<p>While State law permits local authorities to reduce speed limits on streets in business or residential districts and at local intersections (§ 31-14-5), there is little evidence that the cities and towns are taking advantage</p> <p>For state roads, requires approval from State Traffic Commission</p>	<p>Review language of law and make edits if needed; make sure that all town planning directors understand that they have this tool.</p> <p>Consider reducing speed limits on key roads in urban areas to 25 MPH</p>	RISP
E-Bikes Law	Current law is outdated, not reflecting recent advances in technology	Relevant laws and definitions of terms should be updated; see appendix for detailed recommendations	RIDOT

## Safety

POLICY OR PROGRAM	NEED FOR REVISION	RECOMMENDATION	AGENCY LEAD
<b>Safe Routes to School Program</b>	<b>Fewer than half of the state's municipalities have implemented Safe Routes to School (SRTS) projects</b>	Obligate remaining funds while pursuing additional funds for the next round of awards	RIDOT
<b>Vulnerable Road User (VRU) Safety Tracking</b>	<b>Currently there is no convenient way for the public to track/monitor VRU safety</b>	Vulnerable Road Users are now including as a section within RIDOT's SHSP	RIDOT
<b>Newport Waves</b>	<b>This public awareness campaign created by Bike Newport has shown success and should be replicated statewide</b>	NHTSA and DOH - currently funding the Newport program - should increase funding and find local partners to bring this program to other municipalities	Partnership: DOH, local partners
<b>Toward Zero Deaths (TZD)</b>	<b>While the State adheres to Toward Zero Deaths principles, no municipalities have adopted similar policies</b>	Encourage municipalities to adopt TZD action plans, including rural traffic calming recommendations (FHWA-HRT-08-067)	RISP



Newport Waves is a popular program designed to promote safety among all roadway users (Image credit: Newport Waves)



Clarified regulations related to the definition of e-assist bicycles will be beneficial to the bike share program scheduled to launch in Providence in 2018 (Image credit: JUMP, San Francisco bikeshare system)

An evaluation of the policy and program recommendations made above is presented in Section 4.4 on the following pages. Like the evaluation of the candidate bicycle treatments, scoring is based on the BMP goals. Each individual score is based on the recommendation's potential impact on each goal (no impact, little impact, modest impact, moderate impact, or high impact).