



Providence Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission

Jorge O. Elorza, Mayor

Staff Report: Park Street Conceptual Review – Downtown – Ward 12 (For Action)

Presented at November 15, 2018 BPAC meeting

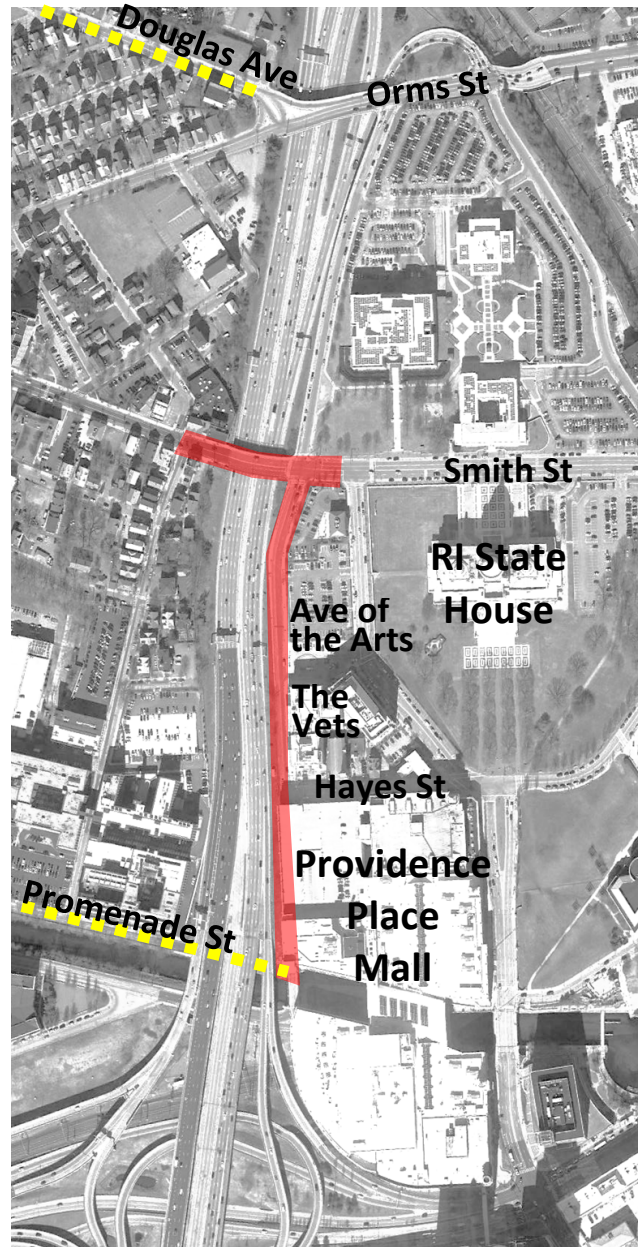
Project Background

The State is planning to reconstruct Park Street between Hayes St and Smith St, as well as the Smith St bridge over I-95. The City of Providence Department of Planning and Development seeks comments from the BPAC regarding conceptual plans for that project.

The Park St corridor serves as a connector between the planned Woonasquatucket Greenway Extension on Promenade St and the planned Douglas Avenue bike lanes, both pictured at right in yellow with the RIDOT project area in red.

Description of Improvements

- To prepare for the next stage of the I-95 Viaduct work, RIDOT is reconstructing the retaining wall on the east side of the highway. This necessitates reconstructing the roadway at the top of the retaining wall, Park St between Hayes St and Smith St, narrower than its current condition.
- At the same time, RIDOT is planning to replace the Smith St bridge of I-95.
- RIDOT presented the City with two alternative designs for the new configuration of Park St: **Alternative 1** retaining similar lane configurations to the existing condition, and **Alternative 2** reducing Park St to one-way northbound to make room for conventional striped bike lanes on Park St. The City proposed an **Alternative 2a**, also reducing Park St to one-way northbound but putting a two-way protected bike lane on the highway side of Park St.

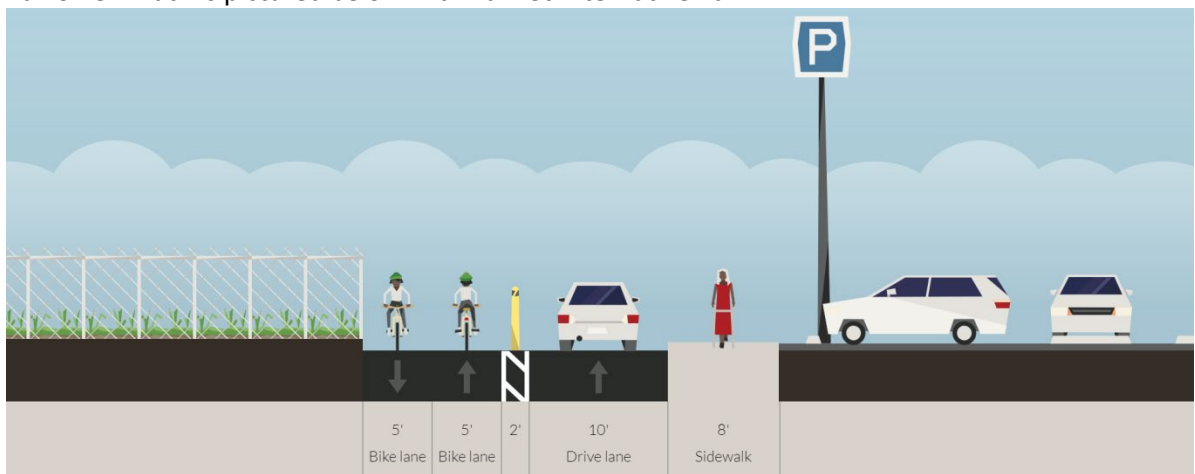




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- RIDOT also proposed alternatives for the Smith St restriping: **Alternative 1** would maintain existing conditions, and **Alternative 2** would add buffered bike lanes to the bridge.
- As part of a separate bridge project that will happen at the same time as the Park St & Smith St work, RIDOT will be working on the Park St bridge between Providence Place & Promenade St over the Woonasquatucket River.
- Park Street is 22 ft wide not including sidewalk at its narrowest point next to Veteran's Memorial Auditorium, and 30 ft wide not including sidewalk between Avenue of the Arts and Smith St. The narrower width is pictured below with Park St Alternative 2a.



- There are significant utility constraints on Park St, with a fire hydrant currently on the highway side in the narrower part of the corridor, and many telephone conduits under the sidewalk adjacent to the Vets.
- The two-way protected bike lane on Park St would transition to:
 - the bike lanes on Smith St by means of a bicycle signal phase and two two-stage turn boxes
 - Hayes St by means of marked openings in the bike lane separation to receive/output bicyclists on the correct side of Hayes St (this transition is significantly more challenging if the project area does not extend to Promenade St, likely necessitating a bicycle signal phase)
 - Promenade St & the Woonasquatucket Greenway ramp under the Mall by using crosswalks in the near term, with the future Greenway Extension improvements creating a more robust connection at this intersection.
- Park St between Hayes St and Promenade St would remain two-way for vehicular traffic under Alternative 2a.



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Staff Recommendations

- The City has already requested that:
 - the project area (including the bike facilities) be extended south to Promenade St for future connection with the Woonasquatucket Greenway Extension. The near-term transition at Promenade St would have bicyclists using the pedestrian signals to get to the correct side of the intersection.
 - The project area (including the bike facilities) be extended east on Smith St to Canal St for connection to the bike facilities RIDOT is also installing on Canal Street.

Respectfully submitted by Alex Ellis.