



PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Mayor Jorge O. Elorza | City of Providence



Figure 1: Rendering showing the new bicycle and pedestrian bridge proposed as Phase 1 that will connect Riverwalk to planned development and investments in Kennedy Plaza, replacing two flooded and unsafe pedestrian tunnels.

NAME OF PROJECT | Riverwalk Resilience Project

CONTACT INFORMATION | **General inquiries:** Chris Martin, Principal Planner, cmartin@providenceri.gov,
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TIMING | We expect to finalize contracts with USDOT by spring 2023 and issue an RFP for an engineering consultant by summer/ fall 2023 for work to begin by late 2023. Engineering and permitting would be complete by late 2025/early 2026, allowing for construction in 2026-2027, pending funding.

FUNDING | The City of Providence was awarded \$7,800,000 in Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) planning funds to advance Phases 1 and 2 of the Riverwalk Resilience Project. The (RAISE) Grant

PROJECT DESCRIPTION |

Background: In Providence, the Riverwalk and Waterplace Park are beloved public spaces in the heart of Downtown. Created in the 1980s and 90s by relocating railroad tracks, fields of surface parking, and roads that once covered the Woonasquatucket, Moshassuck, and Providence rivers, the City of Providence constructed the Riverwalk and Waterplace Park to reclaim the riverfront as a vibrant place for people. Since then, numerous challenges and needs have emerged that must be addressed to preserve these important economic assets for future generations.

Opportunity: The RAISE Grant is a US Department of Transportation (USDOT) program that provides opportunities to invest in road, rail, transit, and port projects with significant local impact. This year's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) will make \$1.5 billion available for these projects.

Overview: The City is prepared to make a series of bold investments that will address: more frequent and severe flooding caused by sea-level rise; a lack of ADA-compliant routes to and along the Riverwalk and in Waterplace Park; public safety concerns due to poor sight lines and access from surrounding streets; water quality issues caused by untreated stormwater runoff; structural degradation of the Riverwalk walls; poor bicycle accessibility along the Riverwalk; and unsafe access for people walking and biking between the central plaza and transportation hub at Kennedy Plaza, the Riverwalk, and Waterplace Park.

Project Status: The project is currently at 30% design. This funding would bring Phases 1 and 2 to final full engineering, continue community engagement, conduct an economic development analysis, and complete permitting.

The RAISE Grant Funded Portion will...

- Replace the pedestrian bridge over the river at Waterplace to make it ADA- and bike-accessible
- Create a new ADA-accessible entrance to Waterplace Park at Francis Street
- Increase connectivity with surrounding streets to improve public safety and accessibility
- Replace flooded, unsafe pedestrian tunnels with a new bike/pedestrian bridge to connect the Riverwalk to Kennedy Plaza (the City's central civic plaza and transportation hub) and catalyze private development
- Create safe new crosswalks for people walking and biking across Memorial Blvd and Exchange Terrace
- Install adaptive signal control technology along Memorial Blvd to adjust signal timing to accommodate changing traffic patterns, improve travel time reliability, reduce congestion, and reduce emissions
- Create a new ADA-accessible shared use path that is safe for people of all ages and abilities between Francis and Steeple streets
- Create seven new ADA access points to the Riverwalk
- Raise the new shared use path and Riverwalk above future flood elevations
- Address structural deficiencies in sections of Riverwalk walls that will remain
- Filter stormwater runoff that currently runs into the river from surrounding streets
- Install new wayfinding and interpretive signage to improve navigability for people walking and biking
- Demolish hardened riverwalk walls between Waterplace and Steeple Street
- Naturalize riverbanks beneath the raised shared use path to improve water quality, resiliency, and habitat

The Riverwalk Resilience Project will...

- Make the Riverwalk fully ADA-accessible
- Enhance the resilience of an at-risk, world-renowned critical public infrastructure asset in the center of Providence
- Improve water quality and habitat for native tidal-river species along an American Heritage River
- Fill a critical gap in Providence's citywide Urban Trail Network, connecting Downtown to the Woonasquatucket River Greenway
- Connect 55 miles of existing regional trail systems that reach beyond Providence to one another, to areas of persistent poverty, historically disadvantaged neighborhoods, and Downtown
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and vehicle miles traveled
- Decrease household transportation costs
- Break down barriers to jobs and opportunities
- Increase opportunities for tourism
- Improve public health through improved air quality and access to sustainable forms of transportation and recreation

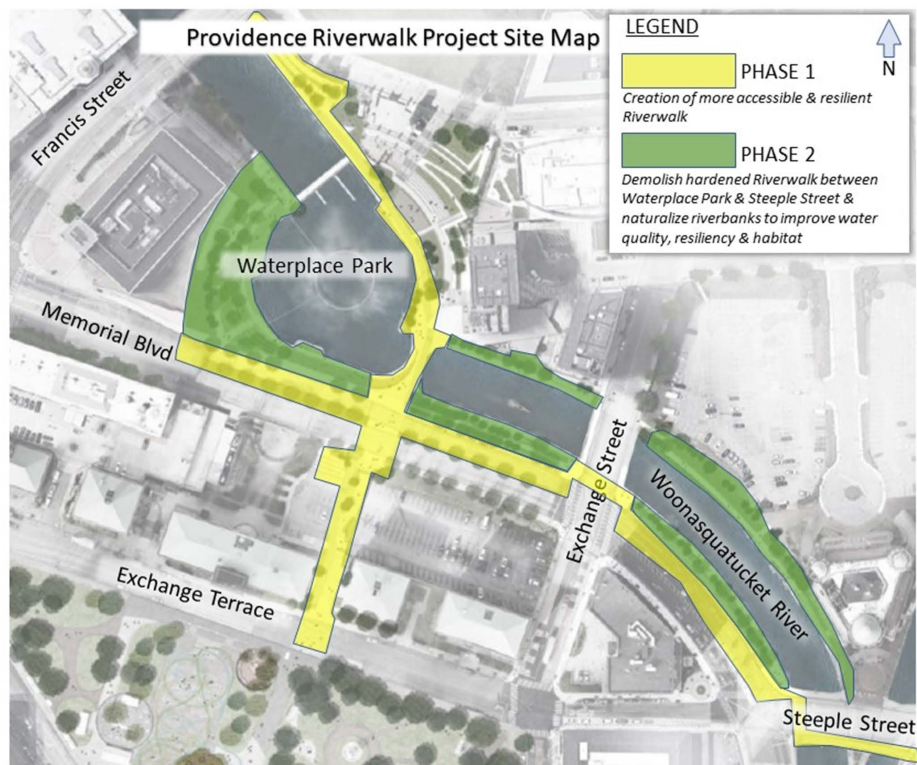


Figure 2: Riverwalk Resilience Project Phasing Plan