Project Background
The City of Providence Department of Planning and Development seeks comments from the BPAC regarding plans developed by RIDOT for changes to Branch Avenue between North Main Street and West River Street. The plans were advanced to 90% before coming to the Commission, in violation of Executive Order 2016-1 which established that significant road projects within the city must be reviewed by the Commission at approximately 10% (“conceptual”) and 30% design.

RIDOT identified this section of roadway as eligible for safety improvements and identified Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funds to complete the project. The constraints within which the project exists are:

- It needs to be advertised in 2020 (plans finalized and then procurement initiated)
- HSIP funding is available for intersection improvements
- Relocating utilities exceeds project budget
- Wetlands nearby project area need to be avoided
- Bridge width not able to be changed

Description of Plans
- 2 new traffic signals: at northbound off-ramp near the cemetery & at the southbound off- & on-ramps near Savers
- Removing right-turn slip lane from northbound off-ramp near the cemetery toward North Main Street
• Replacing non-compliant curb ramps at crosswalks
• Striping to clarify southbound off-ramp and approach to northbound on-ramp

Providence Planning comments sent to RIDOT
• At the intersection of the 95-N off-ramp and Branch Ave, I'm concerned right-turning drivers will proceed on a red light without coming to a complete stop, endangering pedestrians. I recommend the inclusion of a no-turn-on-red sign for the off-ramp here and automatic pedestrian recall for the crosswalk across the off-ramp.
• I am concerned about the proposal for no walk signal across the on-ramp to 95-N. With motorists taking that turn at a high rate of speed I'm not sure what your plan is for making that crossing safe for pedestrians.
• Please change the walk signal across the 95-S on-ramp to be LPI and not push-button actuated.
• This section of Branch Avenue is a critical connection in the planned Urban Trail Network, and yet I see no bicycle facilities included in these plans. Please provide more details about how you will provide a safe and comfortable bicycling experience for all ages and abilities in this project.

Additional staff recommendation
• A crosswalk free of turning conflicts across Branch Avenue at one of the traffic signals near Stop & Shop and Savers should be included.

Respectfully submitted by Alex Ellis.