



CITY OF PROVIDENCE

MAYOR BRETT P. SMILEY

GREEN AND COMPLETE STREETS ADVISORY COUNCIL

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Meeting of the Green and Complete Streets Advisory Council

July 21, 2025, 4:30 PM, First Floor Conference Room, 444 Westminster Street, Providence RI, 02903

Overseeing Body: City of Providence Department of Planning and Development

Voting members present: Kathleen Gannon, Alana Deluty, Aislinn Hanley, Cedric Ye, Rosie Jaswal, Julissa Arce

Non-voting Ex-Officio members present: Alex Ellis, Cpt Luis SanLucas, Nate Urso

Ms. Gannon called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM. Following roll call, Ms. Gannon introduced item #2, approval of minutes from the March 17, 2025 meeting. Ms. Hanley moved approval, Ms. Jaswal seconded, and all voted in favor. Ms. Gannon moved on to the next agenda item, overview of review procedure. Mr. Ellis gave this overview.

Ms. Gannon moved on to the next agenda item, an update on the Safe Streets for All grant project. Mr. Ellis provided an update on the Safety Action Plan completion. Mr. Ellis first presented the design plans for South Water Street, and shared a public comment letter submitted by Representative David Morales, attached. After some discussion, Ms. Deluty moved the following:

1. *"To recommend strongly against the design that includes two lanes of traffic and to recommend that all changes are focused on evidence-based solutions and safety."* Mr. Ye seconded. Ms. Deluty, Mr. Ye, and Ms. Gannon voted in favor, Ms. Hanley and Ms. Arce voted against, and Ms. Jaswal abstained.
2. *"To recommend improving the pedestrian crossing at the northernmost corner of S Water St and improving the curb cut connections between the bike lane and the pedestrian bridge."* Mr. Ye seconded, and all voted in favor except Ms. Jaswal, who abstained.

Mr. Ellis then presented the conceptual plans for Broadway and the Washington Secondary Connection. There was some discussion but no motions were made.

Ms. Gannon moved on to the next agenda item, Announcements, Staff Updates, and Public Comment. The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Alex Ellis.

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

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State of Rhode Island

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

REPRESENTATIVE DAVID MORALES, *District 7*
Committee on Municipal Government and Housing
Committee on Innovation, Internet and Technology
Committee on Education
Member, RI Black and Latino Caucus

July 21st 2025

RE: South Water Street Plan

Dear Green and Complete Streets Advisory Council,

Our city is poised yet again to prioritize convenience over quality; expediency over public health and safety. Every time Providence makes progress in reclaiming streets and infrastructure for public good, we risk treating that progress not as a foundation to build upon, but as political capital to be bartered with.

We moved a highway and created the I-95 District Park. We redesigned South Water Street and installed the city's only protected southbound radial bikeway east of the river. These were intentional public goods, ends in themselves, and meaningful improvements to the safety and livability of our city. Families use the park. Cyclists rely on that lane. I know because many of them are my constituents! These are not just "amenities." They are vital pieces of infrastructure and they save lives.

Yet, the Smiley Administration continues to treat hard-won progress as expendable. The proposal to remove the South Water Street bike lane is not about safety. It's not even about traffic. Afternoon backups rarely extend past Power Street. And alternative routes like Dyer and Point exist and remain underutilized. This isn't policy grounded in evidence. Rather it is the politics of expediency. This project caters to a small group of drivers and commercial interests who view bike infrastructure through a narrow, self-serving lens. Whether talk show hosts or business owners, their loudest argument is inconvenience and this is also how our Mayor frames it. But why should "convenience" be more important than safety, access, and equity?

True leadership means standing with our neighbors, including children, cyclists, and mobility device users, who are navigating dangerous streets in a city that still fails to prioritize their safety. It is a fact that a distracted driver in a half-ton truck poses a far greater danger to public safety than a protected bike lane poses to traffic flow. We all

know this. That's why hundreds of neighbors turned out to oppose the removal. The administration listened, but not with any intention of being moved.

And the proposed solution? Moving the bike path into the park marks no improvement at all. It narrows green space, removes the barrier between families and fast-moving traffic, and encourages higher car speeds through a corridor that should only be made safer. We need to ensure our investments in road infrastructure prioritize safety and expand active transportation. Whether wasting \$750k to remove the old lane or \$4.4 million to rebuild the lane 12 feet closer to the river, spending public dollars to undo one of the most widely supported active transportation projects in the city is an indefensible use of limited funds.

At the heart of this is the city's ongoing failure to invest in a complete and connected bike network. South Water Street lacks connections on either end. That is not an argument for removal: it is a call to complete the work! I strongly support the Broadway protected bike lane, because it connects to key neighborhoods like Downtown, Olneyville, and even Valley, creating a true network. The same must be done here. With connections to the East Bay Bike Path, College Hill, and Kennedy Plaza, South Water Street could continue to thrive as a model corridor.

I urge this body to stand to its purpose set forth in the Green and Complete Streets Ordinance. To allow this removal to proceed is to endorse a future where expediency trumps equity, and public input is treated as a formality rather than a mandate. Providence deserves better. Let's build on our progress, not bulldoze it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DM', with a stylized flourish at the end.

State Representative David Morales
House District 7 – Providence