

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

# Long-Range Transportation Plan and Bicycle Mobility Plan

## Statewide Rhode Island



**MOVING  
FORWARD** **RI**  
2040

PREPARED FOR

Statewide Planning Program  
Division of Planning  
Rhode Island Department of Administration

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## Long-range Transportation Plan

### Bicycle Mobility Plan

## Overview

The Public Participation Plan provides a framework for a comprehensive public outreach process for the development of the State of Rhode Island's Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Rhode Island Moving Forward, and the State's first Bicycle Mobility Plan (BMP). The goal of this Public Participation Plan is to describe the methods by which interested parties will be able to engage with the project team and to offer insight and opinions on the plan throughout all stages of its development. This feedback will inform the goals and strategies of the Long-Range Transportation Plan and the Bicycle Mobility Plan.

This Public Participation Plan was designed to reach a diverse audience, geographically, socially and economically. In addition, the Public Participation Plan will target users of various sectors of transportation (e.g. bus riders, walkers, car drivers, cyclists, etc.). VHB will work closely with Statewide Planning and the Long-Range Transportation Planning Team, which includes staff members from the RI Department of Transportation and the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority, to coordinate these public meetings and events.

## About Statewide Planning and the State Planning Council

Statewide Planning, a division of the State of Rhode Island's Department of Administration, researches and plans Rhode Island's physical and economic development and coordinates the actions of local, state, and federal agencies within the framework of the State's development goals and policies as required by Sections 42-11-10 and 12 of the General Laws. The Statewide Planning Program consists of the State Planning Council and staff who specialize in land use, comprehensive planning, GIS, transportation and other related topics.

The State Planning Council (SPC) oversees the Statewide Planning's work. The SPC adopts plans and policies related to planning, most of which are contained within individual plans, which are elements of the State Guide Plan. The Council has been designated as a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for transportation planning purposes and, as such, the Council adopts the Transportation Improvement Program, a four-year program of transportation investments. Statewide Planning acts as staff to the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), a designation certified by the United States Department of Transportation every four years.

## Planning Requirements

As the federally designated MPO under Title 23 Part 450 – Planning Assistance and Standards of the Code of Federal Regulations, the State Planning Council must adopt a Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) covering at least 20 year, and updated every five years in areas where air pollution levels do not exceed thresholds set by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). In addition to the LRTP, a short-term implementation document called a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which selects projects from the LRTP to fund for construction, must also be adopted by the State Planning Council. No federal transportation money can be spent on a project unless it is in the LRTP and the TIP. In addition to the LRTP and TIP, the Statewide Planning Council, through its staff in Statewide Planning, is required to prepare a Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and other plans and studies, including a plan for public feedback. To meet this requirement, this Public Participation Plan (PPP) is the documented process for providing individuals, public agencies, and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to be involved in the transportation planning process.

## Other Requirements for MPOs And Public Participation

The MPO must comply with the FHWA requirements for MPOs under Title 23, Chapter 1, Subchapter E, Part 450, Subpart C of the Code of Federal Regulations. This also includes the requirements that MPOs “Include a proactive public involvement process that provides complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and supports early and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans and TIPs (23 CFR §450.316).” To achieve full public access, the OTO must adhere to other regulations that require MPOs to be proactive in involving under-represented groups in the planning process and the sharing and provision of information.

- » **Title VI:** Title VI “prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance (Title VI, 42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq.)”. Title VI regulations apply to all organizations that receive federal funds. Along with the federal requirements, MPOs must comply with the Department of Transportation (DOT) rules for Title VI as stated in, FTA C 4702.1B Chapter VI. For the MPO to follow these requirements, efforts are made to ensure the public is made aware of its rights under Title VI through notices on all agendas and press releases. These notices direct the public to OTO’s website where the Title VI plan and complaint form are available. The current Title VI/ADA plan has been updated in 2017 and is available on the Statewide Planning website.
- » **Persons With Disability:** The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1991 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibit discrimination based on a disability by public and private sector parties. As a federally funded entity, the MPO must abide by Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act requires that publicly-funded entities give people with disabilities equal access to benefits of the programs, services and activities that may be offered. MPO meetings for the Statewide Planning Council, Transportation Advisory Committee, Technical Committee and

Bicycle Advisory Committee are open to the public, and conducted in locations that offer ease of access to those with disabilities.

- » **Limited English Proficiency (LEP):** Executive Order 13166 requires improved access to service for LEP persons, and gives Title VI (discrimination) protection to LEP persons. In 2012, the Federal Transit Authority (FTA) released their guidelines and requirements for recipients of FTA financial assistance (FTA C 4702.1). This required MPOs to make an LEP plan, that identifies the LEP populations which might need improved access to the planning process, the methods to identify LEP individuals at public meetings, and identifies available language services.
- » **Environmental Justice:** Executive Order 12898 requires federal agencies to make environmental justice part of their mission by identifying and addressing, disproportionately high and adverse effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations. FTA Circular 4703.1 provides guidance for recipients of FTA financial assistance to incorporate Environmental Justice into plans and projects that receive FTA funding. The MPO includes Environmental Justice analysis as part of the current Long Range Transportation Plan (Transportation 2035) and will include it in Rhode Island Moving Forward, 2040.

## Project Background

The **Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)** is a federally required planning document that must be completed by each state government and metropolitan planning organization every five years. The purpose of this document is to establish a shared vision for transportation in the state over a 20-year planning horizon. This LRTP gives the State government an opportunity to review community, economic development and environmental conditions and needs, set data-driven goals and objectives, and to lay out a plan of projects and actions to aid in achieving those goals. Public and stakeholder feedback are critical components to developing a successful plan and encouraging the broad support needed for implementation.

The **Bicycle Mobility Plan (BMP)** will take a more detailed look at the specific conditions, needs, and gaps surrounding bicycle infrastructure and operations in Rhode Island and identify strategies and projects that could help close gaps, improve bicycling in the State, and achieve the 20-year vision set out by the Long-range Transportation Plan.

## Public Participation Work Plan Principles

The Public Participation Plan for the Long-Range Transportation Plan and Bicycle Mobility Plan will be guided by principles that will help shape the development of each plan. The Public Participation Plan Principles for this process require the planning team to:

- » Seek and sustain widespread involvement of residents, business owners, employees, local groups and public officials throughout the process; educate, engage, and empower these groups during the study.
- » Design a process that maximizes inclusiveness where stakeholders have ample opportunity to express their views.

- › Build consensus through an open, transparent, and collaborative process where public input is sought at every appropriate opportunity.
- › Use social media to help broaden outreach and technology to gather and organize community feedback data.
- › Provide clear, concise communication to the public through a series of informational meetings.

## General Public Engagement

Throughout the planning process, numerous outreach efforts will be targeted to the general public. The project website, weekly project updates, media releases, social media, and surveys will keep the public informed about the status of the project as it advances from initial data collection and analysis to final plan deliverables. General public engagement efforts will include:

- » **Project Website:** To ensure a clear, open, and transparent process, a project website will be established for public access. The website will be designed and maintained by VHB. In addition to providing general information about the project, including updates and notices for upcoming meetings, the website will serve as a one-stop central repository for meeting notes, agendas, announcements, and report documentation. Every agenda, press release, email, or announcement that is sent to the public will contain the website URL. The website is located at [www.PlanRI.com](http://www.PlanRI.com). The website also allows for two-way communication through comment boxes and interactive mapping.
- » **Interactive Map:** The Interactive map will allow the public to locate and identify areas of concern or need statewide, across all modes. The map will be open for public input as the existing conditions and needs/gap assessment is being completed.
- » **Media Releases:** At key stages in the process, VHB will prepare materials in support of media press releases for the local press. It is anticipated that these press releases will correspond to project milestones such as the existing conditions analysis, scenario planning, and final plan.
- » **Surveys:** VHB will work with Statewide Planning to develop electronic and paper survey tools that will be distributed to the public to gain a better understanding of transportation conditions, needs, and gaps.

## Focused Public Outreach

Outreach efforts will be focused on four target areas or groups. They include: 1) the Transportation/Bicycle Advisory Committees, 2) State Planning Council, 3) Governor's Council, 4) Topic Area Meetings, 5) Local Roundtable Discussions, 6) Public Workshops, and 7) On-Going Public Engagement. The consultant team will conduct outreach efforts with these four groups throughout the course of the project. A summary of the goals, outreach tools and deliverables follows. Attached to this document is an assumed calendar of meetings and events described in this plan.

## 1) Transportation Advisory Committee/Bicycle Advisory Committee Meetings – Monthly

The purpose of the Transportation and Bicycle Advisory Committees is to share project progress at key milestones, solicit valuable project feedback from a diverse group of transportation and planning professionals, and request information necessary to inform the plan.

The project schedule assumes that meetings will take place as frequently as monthly. To avoid burdening members who sit on both committees, the goal is to hold committee meetings on the same day. The Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) is an existing formal committee that informs the State Planning Council. The Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) has been assembled by Statewide Planning.



### Staffing

Two to three members of the VHB Team will participate in each of the TAC and BAC meetings, depending on the topic for discussion.



### Outreach Tools and Deliverables

- › Meeting agendas – submitted to the State in advance for approval
- › Presentation materials – including preparation of PowerPoint presentations, informational boards and maps (submitted to the State in advance for approval)
- › Meeting notes

## 2) State Planning Council – Quarterly Meetings

Presentations will be made at State Planning Council meetings to keep the Council informed of project progress and milestones and to gain their feedback through the planning process. The project schedule assumes that meetings will take place quarterly. These updates will take place during the scheduled State Planning Council meeting.



### Staffing

Two to three members of the VHB team will participate in each of the State Planning Council meetings, depending upon the topic of discussion



### Outreach Tools and Deliverables

- › Meeting agendas – submitted to the State in advance for approval
- › Presentation materials – including preparation of PowerPoint presentations, informational boards and maps (submitted to the State in advance for approval)
- › Meeting notes

## 3) Governor’s Council – 3 Meetings

Discussions will be held with a Governor’s Council to keep the council informed of project progress and milestones and to gain their feedback through the planning process. These meetings would take place at key milestones over the duration of the project. This Council

would be made up of Directors of the Department of the Administration, Department of Transportation, Department of Environmental Management, and the Governor's Office.



### Staffing

Two to three members of the VHB team will participate in each of the Governor's Council meetings, depending upon the topic of discussion.



### Outreach Tools and Deliverables

- › Meeting agendas – submitted to the State in advance for approval
- › Presentation materials – including preparation of PowerPoint presentations, informational boards and maps (submitted to the State in advance for approval)
- › Meeting notes

## 4) Topic Area Meetings – 5 Meetings

The purpose of the topic area meetings would be to assemble a group of stakeholders to discuss key topics critical to the LRTP and BMP. The goal of these meetings is to provide equitable opportunities for key topics/modes/segments of the LRTP and BMP to discuss the unique conditions, challenges, and needs within their sector of transportation. Proposed topic areas and meetings attendees include:

- › **Alternative Transportation (*pedestrian/bicycle, transit, active transportation, air quality*)**
  - RIDOT Engineering (Mark Felag)
  - RIPTA
  - RIDOH
  - RI Office of Energy
  - Bicycle Advocacy groups
- › **Asset Management, Ports, and Freight**
  - RIDOT – asset management/performance
  - SPP – Climate change/Sea Level Rise
  - RIDOT – Ferry services
  - RIAC
  - Commerce RI – freight
  - RIEMA
- › **Transportation Network, Funding, & Technology**
  - RIDOT Engineering
  - RIDOT Budget Office
  - RIDOT Office of Highway Safety
  - RIDOT Program Development

› **Scenario Planning – 1**

- Attendees to be determined based on outcomes of the initial meetings and scenarios to be evaluated.

› **Scenario Planning -2**

- Attendees to be determined based on outcomes of the initial meetings and scenarios to be evaluated.



**Staffing**

Two to three members of the VHB team will participate in each of the State Planning Council meetings, depending upon the topic of discussion



**Outreach Tools and Deliverables**

- › Meeting agendas - submitted to the State in advance for approval
- › Presentation materials – including preparation of power point presentations, informational boards and maps (submitted to the State in advance for approval)
- › Meeting notes

**5) Local Roundtable Discussions – 5 Meetings**

The purpose of the local roundtable discussions will be to engage with public officials, planners, and local advocates across the state, capturing all geographies. A total of 5 roundtable discussions will be held, one in each of the five counties. These meetings will take place early in the project schedule to ensure that feedback is incorporated into the scenario planning and needs assessment phases of the LRTP and BMP.



**Staffing**

Two to three members of the VHB team will participate in each of the Roundtable Discussions, depending upon the number of attendees invited



**Outreach Tools and Deliverables**

- › Meeting agendas – submitted to the State in advance for approval
- › Presentation materials – including preparation of PowerPoint presentations, informational boards and maps (submitted to the State in advance for approval)
- › Meeting notes

**6) Public Workshops – 12 Meetings (4 mtgs, each held in three locations statewide)**

The purpose of the public workshops is to gain an understanding from the user standpoint of the strengths, weaknesses, needs, and gaps of the existing transportation system. This valuable feedback will inform the Long-Range Transportation Plan and Bicycle Mobility Plan. In an effort to solicit feedback equitably across the state at key milestones in the project, the following schedule is assumed.

**Workshop Schedule**

PUBLIC WORKSHOPS	DISCUSSION TOPIC	MONTH	LOCATION	# OF MTGS
Round 1	Discovery	September	Providence-Metro East Bay West Bay	3
Round 2	Vision, Goals, Etc.	January	Providence-Metro East Bay West Bay	3
Round 3	Scenarios	March	Providence-Metro East Bay West Bay	3
Final Workshop	Final Draft LRTP/BMP	July	Providence-Metro East Bay West Bay	3
<b>Total</b>				<b>12</b>



**Staffing**

Three to five members of the VHB team will participate in each of the Public Workshops, depending upon the topics discussed.



**Outreach Tools and Deliverables**

This list includes potential tools and resources that could be used as needed.

- › Pre-meeting publicity – support in preparing press releases, mailings and calendar listings
- › Sign-in sheets.
- › Meeting agendas – submitted in advance for approval
- › Project website and social media – the project website will be used to promote the event and to share information with the public following the events such as presentations or graphics.
- › Presentation materials – including hand out materials, boards and PowerPoint presentations. All materials will be submitted in advance for approval.
- › Translation services – including translation of project materials used at given at the public meeting.
- › Meeting notes.