Calming in Cranston
In a “roundabout” way

Making streets safer for pedestrians and ... houses

Responding to longstanding traffic safety concerns, city officials are putting the finishing touches on a modern roundabout at Narragansett Boulevard and Ocean Avenue. Modern roundabouts have proven effective in increasing the safety of pedestrian and motorists - and in the case of this intersection ... houses.

Story in Projo.com
More from Roundabouts USA

The future of RI mass transit takes center stage December 1st

Transit forum will examine lessons learned in Denver, Minneapolis and Hartford as local officials explore how to make transit work for more Rhode Islanders

Nearly 80% of Rhode Island's population lives within a 10-minute walk of a transit stop. Still, only about 2.7% of the state's population uses transit regularly. It's something of a "chicken or egg" conundrum since service must first be robust, convenient and frequent enough to attract would-be riders.

In collaboration with the Coalition for Transportation Choices (CTC), Grow Smart RI is helping to present NEXT STOP: Making Transit Work for Rhode Island, a forum for business, civic and political leaders - together with transit riders - on Tuesday, December 1, 2015, 8:30-11:30 a.m. at the Rhode Island Convention Center.

Featured speakers will include those involved in advancing popular transit services in Minneapolis, Denver and Hartford. A local leaders panel will then examine the challenges and opportunities for making transit work for more Rhode Islanders, saving time and money for commuters, while contributing to the revitalization of urban and town centers and reducing congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.

Concepts and priorities discussed will help to inform a detailed 10-year proposal for transforming our state's transit system a catalyst for sustainable economic growth.

View the Detailed Agenda

Register for Free

Promotional partners include:
Save the Date

Grow Smart's biennial Power of Place Summit will take place on Tuesday, June 21, 2016.

Sponsorship info will be available in January, as will a call for workshop proposals.

Review the 2014 Summit

Commerce Secretary briefs Grow Smart RI supporters about new smart growth-oriented economic incentives

Presentation focused on incentives to preserve historic structures, revitalize urban and town centers, encourage transit-oriented development and invest in downtown streetscape improvements

Commerce RI Secretary Stefan Pryor met with supporters of Grow Smart RI on October 14th for a briefing about Governor Raimondo's WAVE program, a new suite of economic development tools and incentives that is closest aligned with smart growth principles. The program was approved by the General Assembly in June, 2015.

Regulations, Applications now online

Commerce RI has developed and approved the regulations for the incentives program designed to jump-start Rhode Island's economic resurgence.

Descriptions of the new programs and the governing regulations (along with select applications) are now available online.

Click HERE to see a sample excerpt from the Re-Build RI project application criteria pertaining to transit-oriented development.

City and town "Ag Fact Sheets" now available

Data tracks impact of food system on individual cities and towns

Grow Smart RI, as a member of the Rhode Island Food Policy Council, helped to develop fact sheets for all 39 cities and towns and Rhode Island as a whole regarding the impact of the food system. The Fact Sheets are intended to give Rhode Islanders a better sense of the benefits the food system provides individual communities, and a better understanding of the network of businesses, agencies, organizations and institutions that make up our local food system. A food system encompasses all of the processes involved in feeding people: it includes the production, harvesting, and processing of food; its distribution and marketing; its consumption (whether at home, in schools and institutions, or in restaurants); and ultimately, the recycling or disposal of food waste. The fact sheets present a dynamic "snapshot" of the local food system, and they are intended to stimulate discussion about growing the local food system and using data to track and measure progress.

Access the list of Fact Sheets

'Complete Streets' News

RIDOT report showcases "Complete Streets", progress in implementing 2012 law
Grow Smart RI provides statewide leadership for diverse public and private interests seeking sustainable and equitable economic growth. We promote such growth by advocating for compact development in revitalized urban, town and village centers balanced with responsible stewardship of our region’s natural assets - farmland, forests, the coastline and the Bay. We inform leaders, decision makers and concerned citizens about the many benefits of compact development and asset stewardship and provide research and training on proven smart growth strategies. We build broad coalitions that advocate policy reforms and specific projects designed to build communities where all people and businesses can thrive.

In collaboration with partners in the Coalition for Transportation Choices (CTC) and with the support of RIDOT, Grow Smart was influential in promoting passage of Rhode Island's "complete streets" law in 2012.

The law (RIGL 24-16) requires that RIDOT consider complete street design features that facilitate safe travel by all users that expands upon currently accepted state and federal design requirements to accommodate all users, including current and projected users, particularly pedestrians, bicyclists and individuals of all ages and mobility capabilities.

Beginning in 2010, advocates also began mobilizing municipal officials to support local road design features that makes streets safer for all users. Since then, ten city and town councils have passed resolutions encouraging the use of complete streets principles and features when repairing or reconstructing roads and bridges.

At the urging of Grow Smart and others, RIDOT also encouraged its contract consultants to become familiar with a complete streets design manual called Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive Approach, and to apply the recommended practices where prudent and feasible.

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RIDOT releases detailed 10-Year Plan for bridges and roads

632-page document details costs and proposed timeline for fixing bridges, poor road conditions

On October 23rd, RIDOT released a much-anticipated 10-Year Plan - a list of priority recommendations as a component of the state's Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP).

The TIP is the list of transportation projects that the state intends to implement. Development of the TIP is vetted by Rhode Island's federally-mandated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) - the State Planning Council with input from the state's Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC). Grow Smart RI E.D. Scott Wolf is a member of the State Planning Council and our Deputy Director, John Flaherty, serves on the TAC.

Here's what we know about both documents:

The RIDOT 10-Year Plan

- RIDOT's 10-Year Plan makes recommendations for priority bridge/road projects and budgets. The Plan provides scenarios both with and without RhodeWorks RI, the proposed funding plan that introduces truck tolls, specifically to increase funds for bridge repairs.
- The plan is asset management focused, and dedicates early funds to urgent bridge repairs in response to the severely compromised condition of the state's bridges.
- With the limited exception of bridges that include both cars and bikes, the plan addresses transit, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in three general line items -
$80M in yet-to-be-determined investments in mass transit.

$128M in yet-to-be-determined “transportation alternatives” that include bike, pedestrian, Safe Routes to School, recreational trails, and sidewalk retrofits to meet ADA requirements.

$5M is recommended for incentives to choose transportation alternatives such as transit passes, vanpools, bike opportunities, and employer incentives.

The Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)

- The current TIP for years 2013-2016, expires in September 2016.
- The next TIP will serve years 2017-2025, with proposed annual reviews and updates.
- It’s expected that on or about November 16, 2015, the State Division of Planning will release a Guide to Rhode Island’s TIP Development Process.
- The invitation to submit applications for the next TIP will be released soon. We understand the deadline will be on or about January 8, 2016.
- Applicants will be alerted as to which projects from the prior TIP have been resubmitted by RIDOT and which projects will need to be resubmitted by an applicant.
- As part of the upcoming TIP, RIPTA will have a 10-year outline of its federal funding projections for existing and proposed transit service and facility improvements.
- As no bike projects are specifically detailed in RIDOT’s 10-Year Plan, all bike projects from the previous TIP will need to be resubmitted by applicants, even if they were previously identified as high priority.
- The RI Statewide Planning staff will provide applicants with guidance in afternoon and evening workshops on or about November 30, 2015.
- Each applicant organization and/or community will rank priorities for their municipal area, including RIDOT’s recommended projects, along with the new and resubmitted projects included in their application.
- There will be a public process to review all projects submitted.
- The new TIP must be approved by September 30, 2016.
Grow Smart Rhode Island
at the Foundry
235 Promenade Street, Suite 550
Providence, RI 02809
401-273-5711

The Foundry Corporate Office Center,
Grow Smart RI's home

jflaherty@growsmartri.org
http://www.growsmartri.org