

Providence Urban Trail Network Safe Streets and Roads for All Discretionary Grant Program Implementation Grant



Submitted by: City of Providence
Location: Providence, RI
Project Type: Implementation
SS4A Request: \$ 27,200,000
Date: September 15, 2022



MAYOR JORGE O. ELORZA
CITY OF PROVIDENCE

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Application Name	Providence Urban Trail Network
Lead Applicant	City of Providence, RI
If Multijurisdictional, additional eligible entities jointly applying	n/a
Roadway Safety Responsibility (check one of the below)	
1. Ownership and/or maintenance responsibilities over a roadway network	✓
2. Safety responsibilities that affect roadways	✓
3. Have an agreement from the agency that has ownership and/ or maintenance responsibilities for the roadway within the applicant's jurisdiction	✓
Population in underserved communities	29%
State(s) in which activities are located	Rhode Island
Costs by State	\$ 27,200,000
Funds to Underserved Communities	\$7,888,000
Cost total for eligible activity (A) supplemental action plan activities in support of an existing Action Plan	\$200,000
Cost total for eligible activity (B) conducting planning, design, & development activities for projects & strategies identified in an Action Plan	\$5,270,000
Cost total for eligible activity (C) carrying out projects & strategies identified in an Action Plan	\$28,530,000
Action Plan or Established Plan Link	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Providence Great Streets Master Plan (2020) ● City of Providence Green & Complete Streets Ordinance (2021) ● City of Providence Vulnerable Road Users Safety Action Plan (2017) ● Public statement regarding Vision Zero (2022)

Narrative

Overview: The City of Providence seeks \$27,200,000 in implementation funds from USDOT’s Safe Streets and Roads for All Program to advance engineering and construction of the City’s Urban Trail Network (UTN)— a bold investment in a safe, connected, and equitable active transportation network in RI’s Capital City. This project will improve equity and health in our neighborhoods by improving active transportation infrastructure citywide and through creating safe places for people of all ages and abilities who walk, run, bike, and use wheelchairs or other mobility devices. Although Providence is a hub for local and regional transportation services, the City’s transportation network lacks safe, seamless last-mile connections to residential, employment, and cultural activity centers and between its 25 neighborhoods. The City is committed to improving this connectivity and eliminating fatal and serious crashes by reducing vehicular speeds and vulnerable road users’ exposure to vehicular traffic and has moved several initiatives forward to do so.

The City conducted a [Vulnerable Road User Safety Action Plan \(VRUSAP\)](#) in 2017 to evaluate bicyclist and pedestrian crash patterns, identify approaches to improve safety, reduce fatalities and serious injuries for vulnerable road users by half by 2030, and strive Toward Zero Deaths. The study showed that vulnerable road user crashes tripled from 2009-2015 and Providence experienced the most pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities and serious injuries of any RI municipality.

In 2020, the City released its [Great Streets Master Plan \(GSMP\)](#), establishing a vision for infrastructure investments and changes to policies, procedures, and regulations. This includes a vision for a **citywide Urban Trail Network** which: connects every neighborhood with safe routes for people walking, running, rolling, and biking; ensures people can safely, comfortably travel to schools, jobs, parks, libraries, cultural institutions, and other destinations; and connect regional trails to one another, Historically Disadvantaged Neighborhoods, and Downtown. The Network is formed by a combination of on-road (or road adjacent) protected bike lanes/shared use trails, neighborhood greenways on low volume side streets, and off-road shared use paths*. Since 2017, the City has built out about 42% of this network, completing > 33 lane-miles. More work is needed to ensure all neighborhoods are connected and have access to safe, comfortable places to walk, bike, and roll.

**Note: The “project” defined within this grant application focuses on on-road (or road-adjacent) protected bike lanes/shared use paths in combination with ADA and pedestrian safety improvements and does not include neighborhood greenways or off-road trails.*

To further these goals, in 2021, the City Council adopted the [Green and Complete Streets Ordinance \(GCSO\)](#), which establishes an Advisory Council to oversee implementation and makes decision-making more transparent, to which Mayor Elorza [issued a communication](#) in 2022 reinforcing the City’s commitment to Vision Zero.

Locations: We have developed a preliminary list of City-controlled corridors and intersections we seek to improve through this grant, which have been prioritized based on needs related to safety, access, equity, and connectivity. See **Appendix A: Location Map** for more information.

From 2018-2021, there were 1,100 crashes involving people walking or biking in Providence with 260 serious injuries and 8 fatalities. The investments proposed as part of this investment target

70% and 73% of the City’s highest pedestrian and bicyclist crash locations respectively. See **Appendix B: High-Injury Network Compared to Project Locations** for more information.

As part of this work, the City also seeks funds to update the [GSMP](#) to reflect reporting requirements of the [GCSO](#); make modifications to future segments of the UTN based on evolving needs and community input; and update the Vulnerable Road User Safety Action Plan with recent data and integrate it within the [GSMP](#) and a clearer Vision Zero framework.

Response to Selection Criteria

A. Safety Impact

Description of the Safety Problem: Any number of serious injuries or fatalities on the city’s streets is a problem. Crash data suggests a mixed trendline recently, with a 40% increase in pedestrian injuries, 33% decrease in pedestrian fatalities, and a 5% decrease in bicyclist injuries from a 2013 baseline, with the first bicyclist fatality since 2013 occurring in 2021. These trends are detailed further in the [GSMP’s Appendices A-B](#). The biggest factor in traffic fatalities and serious injuries in Providence is that the City’s streets were largely designed according to traditional standards that did not account for the current understanding of urban road safety and driver behavior. The implementation of the UTN will create safer spaces for people to get around without a car. A complete evaluation of safety risk for different modes is incomplete without comparing crashes to the miles traveled by each mode, which Providence has begun and would be able to finalize through this grant.

Safety Impact Assessment: This proposal would improve safety in multiple hot spots of our high-injury network. A recent road diet that added a protected bike lane and pedestrian refuge islands in Providence, reduced motorists exceeding 30 mph by 90% after implementation. Lower speeds are correlated with greater safety ([NACTO](#), [NHTSA](#)). The improvements proposed here are expected to result in similar safety improvements. A 2022 [analysis](#) by NYCDOT found that Protected Bike Lanes, Pedestrian Islands, Curb Extensions, and LPIs reduced injuries for all road users by up to 15% and fatalities by up to 36%. Urban trail projects in Providence have also improved pedestrian signalization and added bus boarding islands that both improve bus service reliability and bus passenger safety. The recent [Broad Street](#) urban trail has made driving safer by eliminating excess driving space, which encouraged speeding and illegal passing movements. Providence uses many cost-effective safety improvement strategies, including traffic signal reprogramming and the initial deployment of low-cost separators to pilot new protected urban trails before upgrading to more permanent separators. “Before” data to evaluate effectiveness of this proposal is already collected. The 2021 [GCSO](#) mandates annual reporting on several safety metrics, building this performance measurement into all the City’s streets processes.

Implementation Costs: Cost estimates were created using current construction costs. If planned revenue sources do not materialize or actual costs exceed project costs, the City will consider allocating additional CIP funds to the project (reducing funding for other projects); working with the State to allocate additional STIP or RIDEM funds to the projects; applying for competitive grant funds from RIDEM, USDOT or other potential funding partners; or scaling back the included project components to match available funds. The estimated total budget is

\$34,000,000 which includes a request of **\$27,200,000** (80%) and local match of **\$6,800,000** (20%) from the City’s Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Bond funds.

Project Budget <i>(See Appendix D: Budget and the SF-424C for more information)</i>	
Project Component	Cost
Administration Costs for UTN Improvements	\$5,270,000
Capital Costs for Construction of UTN Improvements	\$28,000,000
Cost for Street Team Community Engagement (3 years)	\$40,000
Cost for 1 Project Manager (Salary + Fringe) for 4 years	\$490,000
Great Streets Master Plan and VRUSAP Updates	\$200,000
Estimated Total	\$34,000,000

B. Equity, Engagement and Collaboration

Decreasing Existing Disparities and Ensuring Equitable Investments: Providence’s low-income populations are especially vulnerable to road safety issues: 100% of Providence’s highest-crash intersections for people walking and 95% for biking are in Areas of Persistent Poverty. Accordingly, 100% of the total cost of this project will be applied to Census Tracts considered Areas of Persistent Poverty and 25% to Historically Disadvantaged Neighborhoods. **This investment serves a diverse, densely populated urban area most impacted by issues of high poverty, low incomes, public health, and road safety. It benefits those most in need by improving road safety and public health, increasing access to affordable, sustainable transportation choices, and reducing household expenses. It addresses racial equity and barriers to opportunity through increased access to job centers in areas with high unemployment rates and improves connectivity to popular commercial, institutional, and service centers.** Providence is diverse, with 16%, 43.5%, 5.6% and 4% of the City’s population being Black, Latino, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Other Non-white respectively. Issues of equity and public health impact these populations more than others. The City uses tools like [RIDEM’s Environmental Resource Map](#) to identify and minimize adverse impacts to Environmental Justice (EJ) communities while we prioritize investments in our UTN that improve EJ areas.

Poverty, Household Income, and Affordability: Providence’s poverty rate is twice the national rate and median household income is 27% below the US median. **The UTN benefits existing Providence residents, increasing accessibility and affordability for underserved, overburdened, and disadvantaged communities by improving sustainable, affordable transportation options and reducing household transportation costs.** 42% of Providence households are overburdened by housing and transportation costs (spending >45% of their income on such costs) ([CNT’s H+T Index](#)). This burden is even higher in some neighborhoods such as Federal Hill (45%), Washington Park (66%), and Mt Pleasant (50%). A recent [Rent.com report](#) found a one-bedroom rental unit’s average monthly cost in RI nearly doubled from 2020-2021, making RI the state with the largest increase nationwide and pointing to a need to reduce these costs. The

cost of two-bedroom units increased 180% during the same period (2nd largest increase nationwide). **Investment in Providence’s UTN will help reduce reliance on Single-Occupancy Vehicles (SOVs) and household transportation costs.**

Public Health and Environmental Justice: Much of Providence is [identified as an EJ Area by RIDEM](#), meaning it is disproportionately stressed by health impacts. The 60% of residents who live in Areas of Persistent Poverty and 20% in Historically Disadvantaged Communities disproportionately experience poor public health outcomes and consequences from climate change and pollution. Recent data shows a need for more access to recreational activity and active transportation: >60% of Hispanic and non-Hispanic Black adults and youth in RI are less physically active than recommended; from 2018-2020, >1,600 Providence children were hospitalized for asthma and of those, 63% were Hispanic, 22% Black, and 7% White ([RI Hospital](#)); 10.6% of Providence County adults have diabetes (2021, [Data USA](#)) and 33% have hypertension. To overcome these health disparities, the City uses a “Health in all Policies” framework to address social determinants of health, outcome drivers, and inequities by incorporating health considerations into decision-making across policy areas. **Investment in the UTN furthers this commitment through increasing opportunities for everyone to live healthy lives and addresses climate justice and public health issues by: improving air quality through reduced reliance on SOVs and a reduction in Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT); eliminating barriers that keep people from accessing free recreational public amenities; encouraging physical activity like walking, running, and riding bicycles; increasing access to parks, open space, and regional trails; and encouraging active transportation for socioeconomically vulnerable residents who have limited access to safe places to walk, run, and bike.**

Preventing Unintended Consequences for People: As a bicycle and pedestrian safety project, the UTN increases access to sustainable transportation options, maximizes location-efficient development, and reduces household transportation costs. As outlined in our [Affordable Housing and Anti-Displacement Plan](#), the City prioritizes avoiding displacement of residents and residential construction projects with sustainable, affordable transportation options and proximity to job centers. See this document’s “[Decreasing Existing Disparities and Ensuring Equitable Investments](#)”, “[Increasing Mobility & Connectivity for All Road Users to Jobs & Opportunities](#)” and “[Poverty, Household Income, and Affordability](#)” sections for more information on issues related to affordability, transportation access, car ownership, and access to jobs and opportunities.

Stakeholder and Public Engagement and Continued Engagement Over Time: Our approach to public engagement centers around meeting community members where they are and including voices of those most impacted by decisions. This involves attending existing neighborhood association meetings, partner organization meetings, and community events and conducting on the ground outreach in English and Spanish. This is critical to reach previously Underserved Communities and people who face barriers to attending traditional public meetings in the comfort of their own cultural spaces. In recent years, in collaboration with the City, the [Providence Streets Coalition](#) developed a Street Team— a group of trained, paid bilingual community members who attend these cultural events— to gather feedback and inform people of projects related to planning and implementation of the UTN. The City also conducts virtual and in-person public meetings, mails flyers to surrounding property owners, businesses, and residents, and hosts public conversations about projects at conceptualization and 30% design as part

of our [Green and Complete Streets Advisory Council \(GCSAC\)](#). Throughout implementation of the UTN, the City will use these techniques, including in-person public hearings that conform to NEPA and USDOT requirements, to ensure communities remain empowered, consulted, and included in decision-making processes and progress throughout construction. This project will comply with requirements of Chapter VI of Title 49 CFR to ensure benefits and services are made available to and fairly and equitably distributed among beneficiaries without regard to race, color, or national origin. The City will evaluate impacts to road safety following project implementation and report annually to the GCSAC and larger community for discussion and feedback.

Leveraging Partnerships: The City began collaboration with local partners as part of the [GSMP](#) process and in advanced engineering and construction of other UTN segments completed to date. A broad range of stakeholders continue to support this work, including government entities, community-based organizations, public entities, and private entities. The City works collaboratively with and leverage funding from the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) on several UTN projects that will connect to these improvements, including [Broad St](#), [Blackstone 1A](#), the [Woonasquatucket River Greenway](#), the [6/10 Connector bike path](#), and the [Henderson Bridge bike path](#). This project also leverages the MPO's, RIDOT's, RIPTA's, and RIDEM's investment in creation and implementation of the [Transit Master Plan](#) and [Bike Mobility Plan](#). Other partnerships including the [Providence Streets Coalition](#) (and their >60 supporting organizations), [RI Bicycle Coalition](#), [Grow Smart RI](#), and [RAMP](#) will also be leveraged toward our shared goals. Private partners whose goals this project shares include the [Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce](#) (with >800 members), [Providence Downtown Hospitality Group](#), and [Downtown Providence Parks Network](#) (an offshoot of the [Providence Foundation](#), supported by >140 private corporations, nonprofits, and institutions). Furthermore, this project leverages partnerships with local institutions such as Brown University, Johnson and Wales University, and the Rhode Island School of Design as they seek to improve quality of life for students and staff, reduce negative impacts on neighborhoods, and increase sustainability.

Alignment with Equity Analysis Performed as Part of Existing Action Plan: The [GSMP Appendix D](#) outlines the methodology used to prioritize segments of the UTN, considering the poverty and car access of households served, as well as metrics such as residential density and segment connectivity, as equity is also about the prioritization making sense to people in underserved communities.

C. Effective Practices and Strategies

Complete Streets: Complete Streets are the foundation of the improvements proposed in this project. While the [GSMP](#) charts a path for all streets in Providence to be safe, clean, healthy, inclusive, and vibrant, the UTN is intended to be a place where streets are not just “complete” but go above and beyond to prioritize the safety of vulnerable road users.

Accounting for Safety of All Road Users in Implementation Through Evidence-based Activities: The entire proposal is oriented toward improving safety of vulnerable road users by adding evidence-based improvements to locations with persistent safety issues. Separated bicycle lanes, roundabouts, walkways, leading pedestrian intervals, pedestrian refuge areas, and cross-walk visibility enhancements in particular are considered in these locations.

Support from Existing Complete Streets Policies and Plans: The UTN complements and advances goals of numerous local and statewide plans and policies related to Complete Streets, including: the City’s [Great Streets Master Plan](#), [Vulnerable Road Users Safety Action Plan](#), [GCSO](#), [Climate Justice Plan](#), and [Comprehensive Plan](#); and the State’s [Bicycle Mobility Plan](#), [Transit Master Plan](#), [Climate Action Plan](#), [Resilient Rhody](#), and [Highway Safety Performance Plan](#).

Improving Accessibility and Multimodal Networks: Once complete, the UTN will connect 166,792 people living and 99,324 people working within ¼-mile of the network (a 4.5x and 2.5x increase respectively, over 2017 levels) with safe infrastructure closely based on the “[All Ages and Abilities](#)” guidelines from [NACTO](#). It will fill critical gaps in the multimodal transportation network, supporting last mile connectivity. Just outside Providence’s borders are 60 miles of popular rail trails (the East Bay, Blackstone, Woonasquatucket, and Washington Secondary bike paths) which are disconnected from one another and most Providence residents, especially underserved and historically disadvantaged areas. The UTN will fill those gaps, bringing these regional assets to the front door of all Providence neighborhoods, providing a safe way to experience our City. By linking these new walking and biking assets into the multimodal transportation network at Providence Train Station, the Kennedy Plaza bus hub, the Downtown Transit Connector bus spine, and the planned I-195 District bus hub, this project also increases access between of affordable, sustainable transportation modes.

Correcting Barriers to Individuals with Disabilities: Under the [GCSO](#), any significant road project needs to improve access for people using wheelchairs. This project will use PROWAG and improve safety for all road users, including through upgraded curb ramps, designing shared-street urban trail segments to have 95th percentile speeds no higher than 25 mph, designing bicycle facilities wide enough for adaptive bikes or trail users with lower speed and lower visual acuity, prioritizing sidewalk improvements to improve ADA compliance as part of urban trail projects, and encouraging use of protected urban trails by those using mobility devices.

Creating a Safer Community: This project will create a safer community by using proven countermeasures to make our streets safer for people using all modes, but especially those walking, bicycling, and using wheelchairs or personal mobility devices.

Establishing Basic, Evidence-based Roadway Safety Infrastructure Features/ Improving Safety for All Road Users Using Proposed PROWAG: See response in [Complete Streets](#).

Applying Systemic Safety Practices that Involve Widely Implemented Improvements based on High-risk Roadway Features Correlated with Particular Severe Crash Types: As indicated in [Section A](#), high-risk roadway features that put people bicycling and walking in proximity to high-speed traffic are proposed to be improved as part of this project.

Safe System Approach: This project will implement safe roadway systems with infrastructure proven to result in slower vehicular speeds and allow for road users to make mistakes without as great a risk of injury or death as is present on traditionally designed roads.

Encompassing National Roadway Safety Strategies: This project is based around the principles of the National Roadway Safety Strategy: proactively redesigning our streets to create redundancies to protect vulnerable human bodies from death or serious injury from the inevitable mistakes that all road users can be expected to make. The primary investment category for this application is infrastructure, with a focus on the Safer Roads and Safer Speeds Strategies. The project will create roadways that help to “self-enforce” speed limits, re-engineering roads to slow down vehicles rather than relying primarily on enforcement to manage speeding.

Creating a Transportation System that Accounts For and Mitigates Human Mistakes: The UTN will mitigate human mistakes and avoid death and serious injuries in crashes, by reducing vehicular speeds and providing separation from motor vehicles for people walking and bicycling.

Incorporating Data-driven Design Features: As described in the [Safer Streets Strategy of the NRSS](#), increased speed of motor vehicle traffic is correlated with increased risk of injury and death. This project will slow down cars and make better facilities for people walking and biking by incorporating data driven design features such as those listed in the Creating a Safer Community section, creating a transportation system that accounts for and mitigates human mistakes.

Innovative Practices and Technologies:

Incorporating Practices that Promote Efficiency within Planning and Road Management

Lifecycle: The City is committed to maintaining its infrastructure in a state of good repair and improving safety. The City currently oversees a FY2020-22 \$168M [Capital Improvement Program](#) (CIP) to rebuild and improve physical public infrastructure. In addition to coordinating repaving with the UTN improvements as required in the [GCSO](#), the Department of Public Works coordinates regularly with utility companies to ensure that major utility work happens before any resurfacing to maximize efficiency and minimize any openings in newly placed road surface.

Informing Implementation and Location by Integrating Data Beyond Roadway and Crash information: The prioritization methodology for the [GSMP](#), detailed in [Appendix E](#) resulted in the proposed project list by using data on poverty, car ownership, residential density, business density, access to jobs, and access to points of interest.

Informing Project and Effectiveness by Fostering Applied, Data-driven Research and Experimentation: The City plans to measure the effectiveness of the proposed improvements by counting volumes of travel by different modes before and after implementation, speeds of motor vehicle traffic, and performing analysis of crash data.

Adopting Innovative Technologies or Practices to Promote Safety and Equity: This project will include innovative technologies and applications including [road diets](#) to reduce speeding and improve safety for road users contributing to [safer roads](#) and [speeds](#) as part of USDOT’s Safe System Approach; [virtual public involvement](#) through Zoom, online surveys, and social media to expand engagement in addition to traditional in-person engagement methods.

D. Climate Change & Sustainability, & Economic Competitiveness

Providence is committed to action on climate change. In 2016, Mayor Elorza set a goal for Providence to become carbon neutral by 2050, eliminating GHGs from buildings and transportation. To

reach this goal, Providence developed an equity-focused [Climate Justice Plan](#) that sets carbon-reduction targets and addresses system-level changes needed to ensure a just, equitable transition away from fossil fuels. **The UTN addresses that plan’s sustainability priorities by reducing VMTs, increasing low-carbon transportation options in frontline communities, and investing in infrastructure to make walking and biking safer and more accessible. This project also addresses sustainability priorities from other local and statewide plans** including the: [Great Streets Master Plan](#), [Comprehensive Plan](#), [State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan](#); the State’s [Transit Forward RI 2040 Plan](#); and the State’s [Land Use 2025 Plan](#). This investment also complements efforts by environmental agencies working to improve our region including the RI Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM), EPA, the [Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council](#) (WRWC) and the [Nature Conservancy](#).

Reducing Congestion and Motor Vehicle-related Pollution: The UTN supports mode shift to reduce emissions and motor vehicle congestion by creating safe, convenient connections for people walking and biking that connect to regional trails, regionally important public transit via the Providence Train Station, Downtown Transit Connector, Kennedy Plaza bus hub, and planned I-195 District bus hub, and major employment centers citywide. On average Providence households drive 14,768 VMT/year, contributing to congestion and 5.69 tons/household of GHG emissions from transportation sources/year (CNT). RI’s most significant GHG source is transportation (40%, [State of RI](#)), especially light-duty passenger vehicles. Meeting the plan’s target requires a 2% VMT reduction by 2035 and 10% reduction by 2050 by promoting and investing in alternative transportation and encouraging higher-density development. In 2021, RI passed the [Act on Climate](#) which mandates net-zero emissions by 2050. [Recent polling](#) shows 71% of residents would bike more if protected bike lanes in the UTN were built. **With clear demand, and evidence that switching from cars to bikes reduces emissions, this project provides a strong opportunity to help the State meet its Act on Climate mandate.** Most congestion in the state is centered around metro Providence with 50% of all highways within the City congested during weekday evening peak commute periods. **By encouraging mode shift to walking, biking, and transit, this project will reduce burdens of commuting on congested roadways for people traveling in and through Providence.**

Increasing Safety of Lower-carbon Travel Modes: In a dense city such as Providence, the climate benefit of investments in transit, walking, and bicycling infrastructure is higher than areas with less conducive development patterns, with significant mode-shift potential to these lower-carbon modes if sufficient safety is provided. The UTN is primarily designed to provide the safety necessary for more people to make lower-carbon travel choices.

Reducing GHGs by Supporting Fiscally Responsible Land Use and Transportation Efficient Design: By increasing mobility and spurring further growth within urban Providence, the UTN benefits existing residents and promotes additional development near affordable, sustainable transportation modes. This advances the City and State’s economic development and land use goals, including: the City’s [Comprehensive Plan](#) and the State’s [RI Rising](#) plan. In 2006, RI revised its [State Land Use Plan](#), incorporating recommendations and policies to discourage urban sprawl, including an emphasis on higher density development supported by efficient, accessible public transportation to reduce VMTs. In 2014, Providence adopted a progressive Zoning Ordinance that eliminates parking minimums for many uses and areas and increases

flexibility for remaining minimums, strengthens design regulations to ensure dense, walkable, bikeable development, and increases density in already dense, transportation-efficient areas. The UTN will also catalyze clean up and redevelopment of brownfields causing environmental harm and improve air quality; after centuries of unregulated industry and neglect.

Increasing Economic or Business Activity Due to Enhanced Safety Features for All Road Users: Trails are [proven](#) to draw visitors, customers, and residents that support local businesses. People walking or biking by businesses during regular daily trips are more likely to visit businesses on their routes more frequently than those in cars and spend as much or more per trip ([Bloomberg](#)). The UTN advances Providence’s economic competitiveness by increasing the number of people walking, biking, and rolling through commercial corridors and connecting into citywide and regional transportation networks, creating a multimodal system; and catalyzing, concentrating, and accelerating development in the urban core which has infrastructure, utilities, and services to accommodate growth. This project complements the more than \$2.03 billion in private development efforts that have occurred in Providence since 2015.

Increasing Mobility & Connectivity for All Road Users to Jobs & Opportunities: By proactively addressing racial equity and disparities, the UTN removes barriers for individuals and communities to transportation, jobs, and opportunities citywide. Construction of I-95 and other highways separated Providence neighborhoods from one another, making it especially difficult for the nearly 20% of households without access to a vehicle to navigate the city. The UTN will improve access to job centers for historically disadvantaged areas and especially for households without a car. This project helps overcome the isolation of Providence’s economically disadvantaged neighborhoods by adding affordable transportation choices that connect people to employment hubs, world-class institutions, and social services. Furthermore, 52,600 people work within walking distance of the planned UTN. This includes many of the State’s largest employers like Lifespan, Care New England, Citizens Financial Group, Brown University. This investment will offer more reliable, efficient ways to access good-paying jobs and opportunities.

Improving Multimodal Transportation Systems that Incorporate Affordable Transportation Options: The City and Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) are committed to increasing the efficiency of Providence’s transportation network, increasing transit ridership, walkability, and bikeability and closely coordinate to advance mobility investments. The UTN provides improved connections to multimodal transportation centers and creates safe connections for people using the City’s micromobility options (bike and scooter share). A recent urban trail on [Broad Street](#) enhances the highest-ridership bus line in the state with bus boarding islands, in-lane stopping, and signal coordination. Future segments of the UTN are also coordinated with RIPTA’s service plans for high-frequency transit and existing high-frequency routes.

Advancing Quality Jobs and Workforce Programs: With an estimated \$28M construction cost, the UTN project is anticipated to directly generate 476 FTE jobs ([Rails to Trails, AASHTO](#)), significantly more than the 350 jobs that would be generated by the same investment in highways. The City [Code of Ordinances requires](#) contractors to be affiliated with and utilize a **state-registered apprenticeship program**. The UTN also provides an excellent opportunity to advance **workforce development** through three local jobs and apprenticeship programs– 1)

[Building Futures](#), 2) [First Source](#), and 3) the City’s [Disadvantaged Business Program](#)— to create ladders of opportunity. Both the [City of Providence](#) and [State of Rhode Island](#) have laws requiring the utilization of Minority and Women’s Business Enterprises. The City also requires contractors to comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations around fair labor standards, discrimination, Davis Bacon wages, and all other relevant regulations.

Improving the Economy and Breaking Down Barriers Through Access to Cultural Sites and Tourism: This project mitigates barriers and improves access to cultural sites and events to build community and foster neighborhood vitality (a strategy of the [PVDx2031](#) plan). New UTN wayfinding and interpretive signage will improve the experience of people walking and biking to parks, libraries, museums, and cultural institutions citywide. Annually, >1,000,000 visitors come to Providence to experience the City’s vibrant art and culture, universities, conferences, world-class restaurants, and festivals. The UTN will connect and draw people directly into our diverse neighborhoods, commercial corridors, and cultural attractions.

Project Readiness

Providence has moved swiftly to implement 42% of the UTN since 2017 and is prepared to continue implementing quickly. As the grant recipient and owner, the City will be responsible for implementation, procurement, administration, operations, liability, fiscal responsibilities for overruns, and capital and maintenance needs. The City is familiar with federal funding obligation processes; has significant experience administering funds from USDOT, EPA, EDA, and HUD; has the capacity and ability to continue sponsoring, building, and maintaining the UTN; and brings much managerial experience to the project. The Department of Planning and Development (DPD), who will oversee this work, employs 50 people to implement programs related to environmental cleanup, economic development, housing and community development, transportation, and public realm investments. To ensure compliance with federal regulations and fiscal management of grants, >25% of DPD’s staff is devoted to regulatory and fiscal compliance officers. ***Local funds are committed as documented in a letter from Mayor Jorge Elorza in Appendix G and have been approved as part of the City’s \$222M Capital Improvement Program as noted in the letter.***

As part of this project, the City will hire a consultant to conduct documentation, generate reports, and obtain approvals as required by NEPA. We are familiar with the NEPA process for bicycle and pedestrian projects such as this within the existing public right-of-way. All of the proposed projects are contained in the [State’s Bicycle Mobility Plan](#), and upon award, the [STIP](#) would be amended to add the project. The proposed work is all within the public right-of-way or City-owned land. Public involvement will exceed the requirements of the City’s [GCSO](#) and will involve presentation to neighborhood groups and street team deployments in addition to required public review at the Green and Complete Streets Advisory Council. The City’s Board of Contract and Supply meets twice every month to advertise RFPs, approve contract awards, and other procurement communications. Minimal utility coordination is expected to be necessary for these projects, but the City hosts regular coordination meetings with all utility providers where the proposed projects will be discussed. The City of Providence is prepared to initiate activities immediately upon receipt of a USDOT grant and execute projects in a timely fashion. Key past and future milestones are outlined in **Appendix F: Key Milestones**