



October 2024 Update



RIPTA Metro Connector Study

High-Capacity Transit Alternatives Analysis

Zachary Agush and Sarah Ingle, RIPTA



RHODE ISLAND PUBLIC TRANSIT AUTHORITY



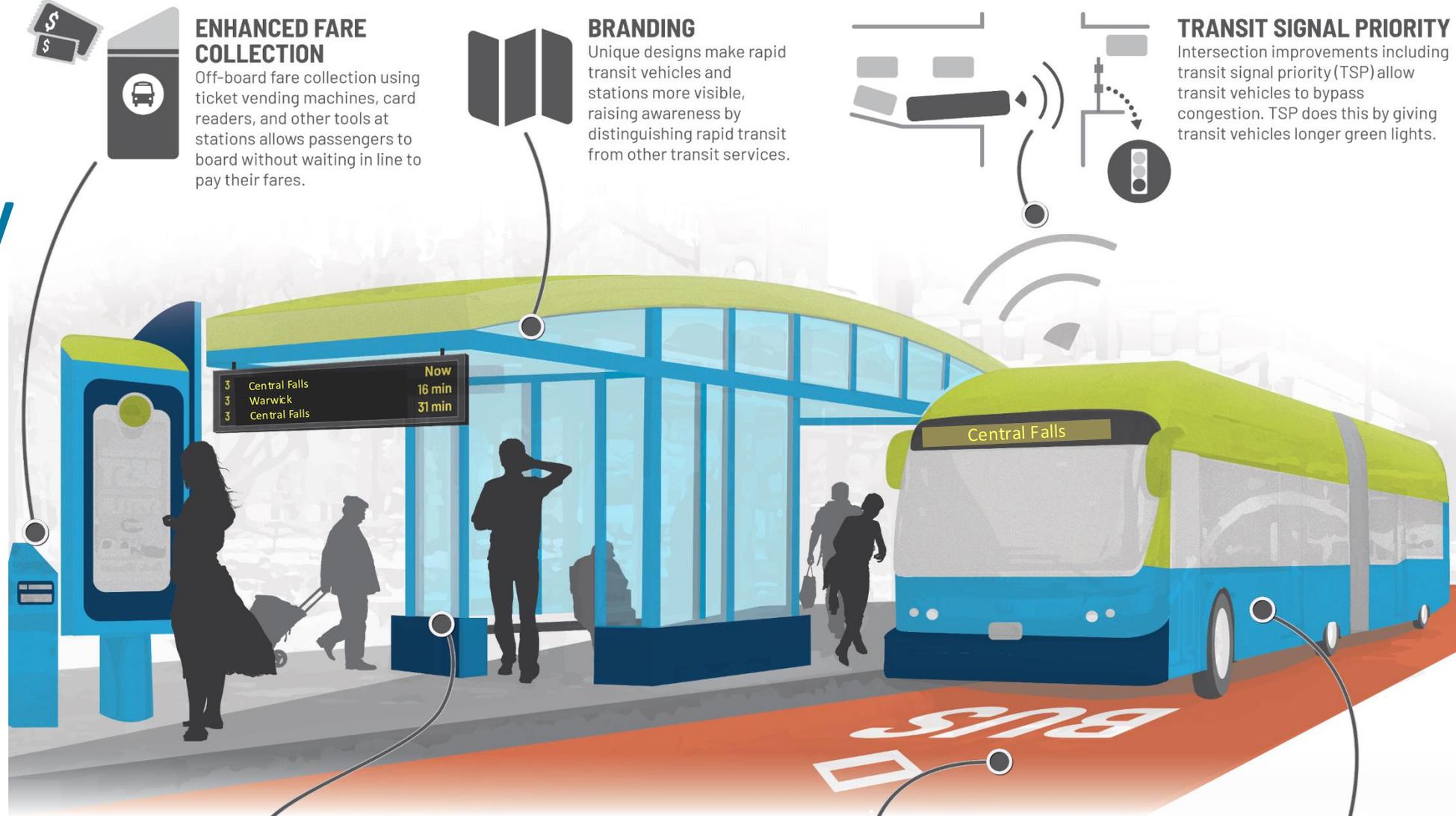
Agenda

Today we hope to give you a sense of what the Metro Connector Project is about, why we are doing it, what we are hoping to accomplish, and how you can be involved.

- 1 What is High-Capacity Transit?
- 2 Background and Context
- 3 Project Purpose and Goals
- 4 Timeline and Next Steps

What is high-capacity transit?

*An emphasis on being **more competitive to driving** through speed, reliability, capacity, convenience, and experience.*



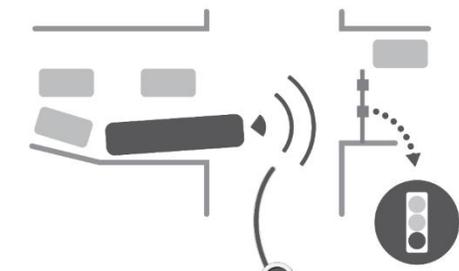
ENHANCED FARE COLLECTION

Off-board fare collection using ticket vending machines, card readers, and other tools at stations allows passengers to board without waiting in line to pay their fares.



BRANDING

Unique designs make rapid transit vehicles and stations more visible, raising awareness by distinguishing rapid transit from other transit services.



TRANSIT SIGNAL PRIORITY

Intersection improvements including transit signal priority (TSP) allow transit vehicles to bypass congestion. TSP does this by giving transit vehicles longer green lights.

ENHANCED STATIONS

Rapid transit stations include raised platforms, ticket vending machines, real-time arrival information, larger shelters, and other passenger amenities.



DEDICATED RUNNING WAYS

Transit-only right-of-way separates transit from traffic, and may be painted to increase visibility.



HIGH-CAPACITY VEHICLES

Larger transit vehicles provide more capacity, more doors, and lower floors for easier boarding and alighting.





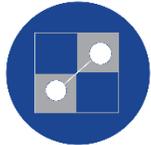
Background and context

The idea for this project came from the Transit Forward RI Master Plan

Adopted in 2020, this Transit Master Plan highlights high-capacity transit as one of its 5 major categories for investment



Improve Existing Services



Expand Services to New Areas



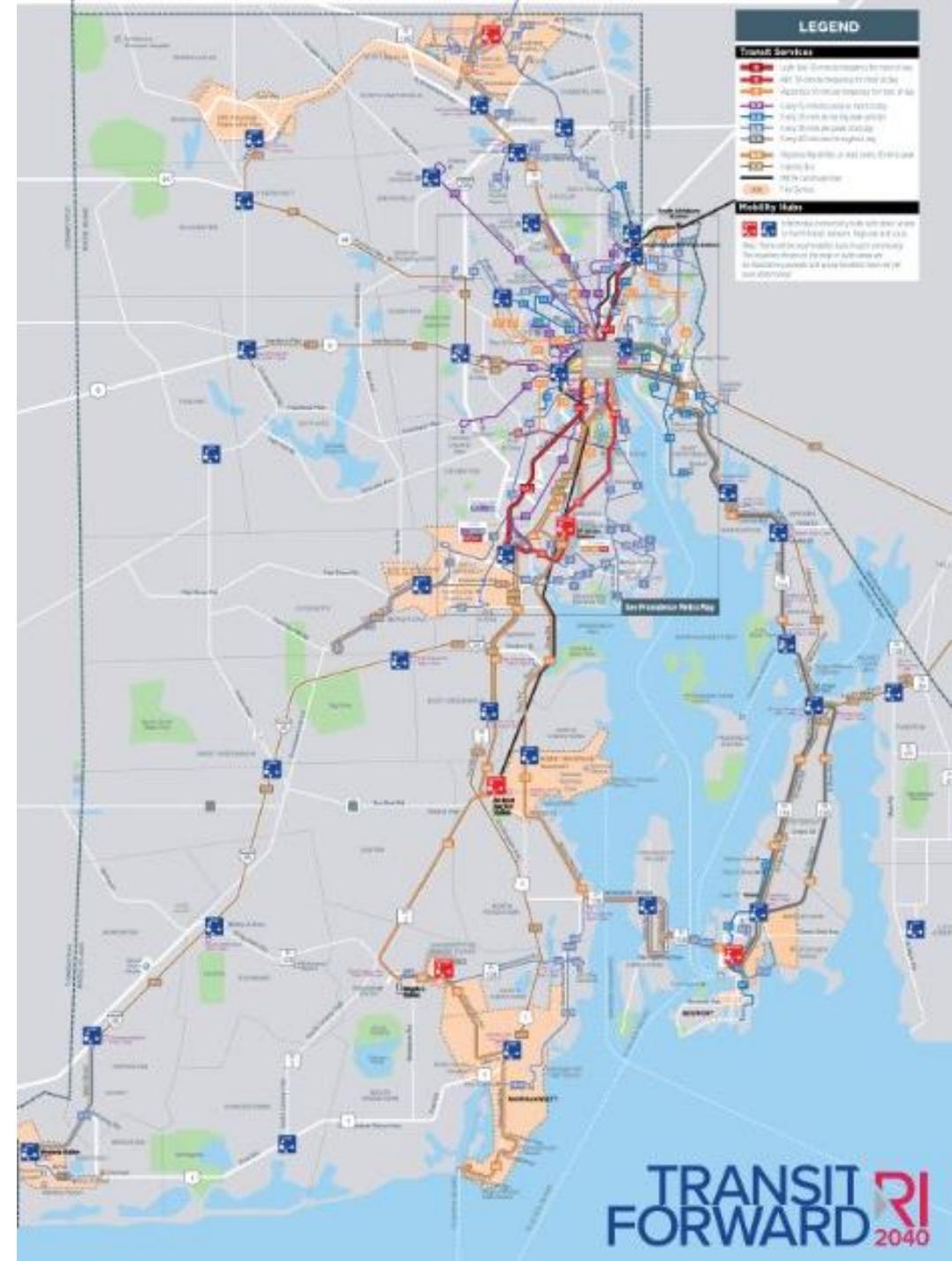
Develop High-Capacity Transit



Improve Access to Transit

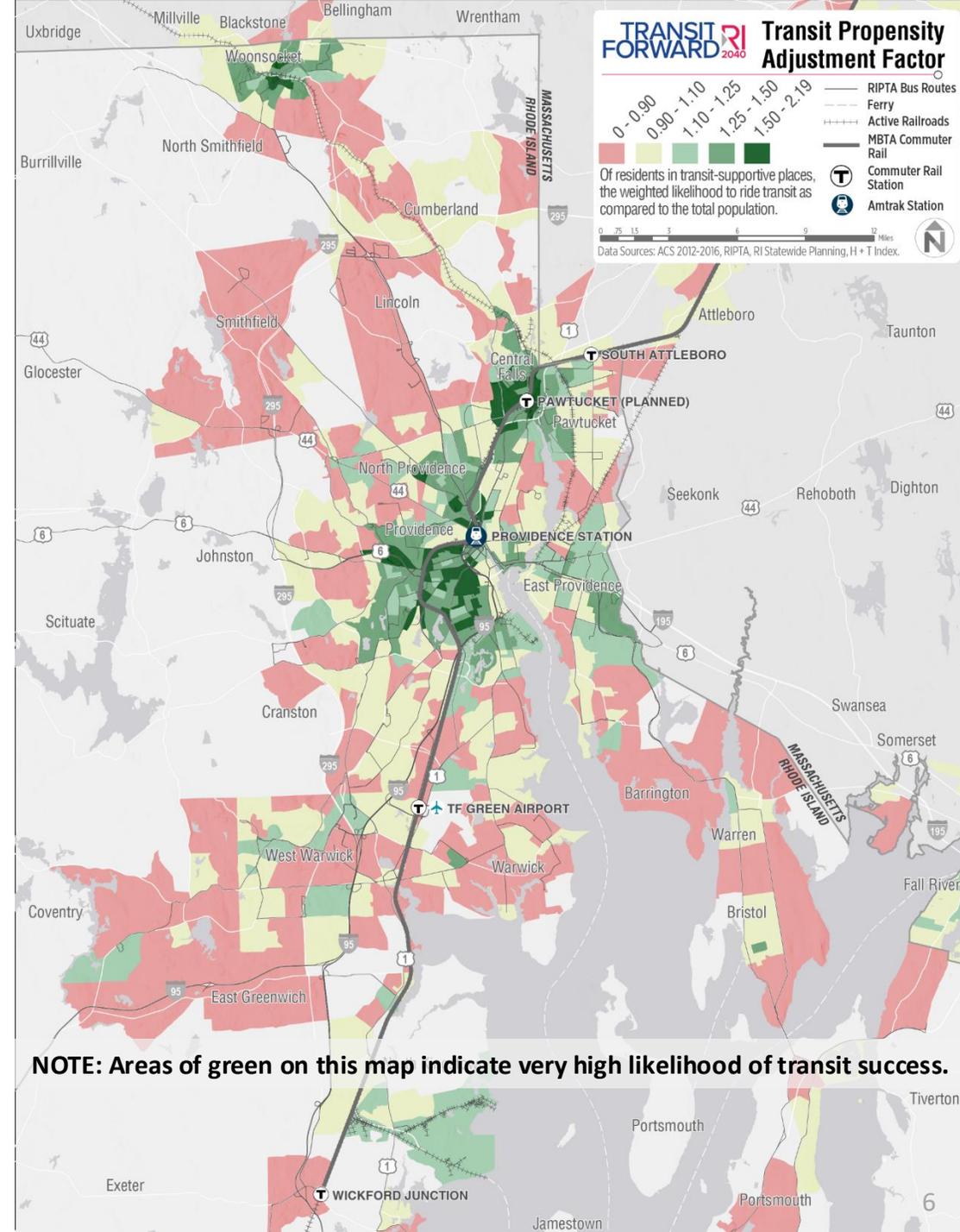


Make Service Easier to Use



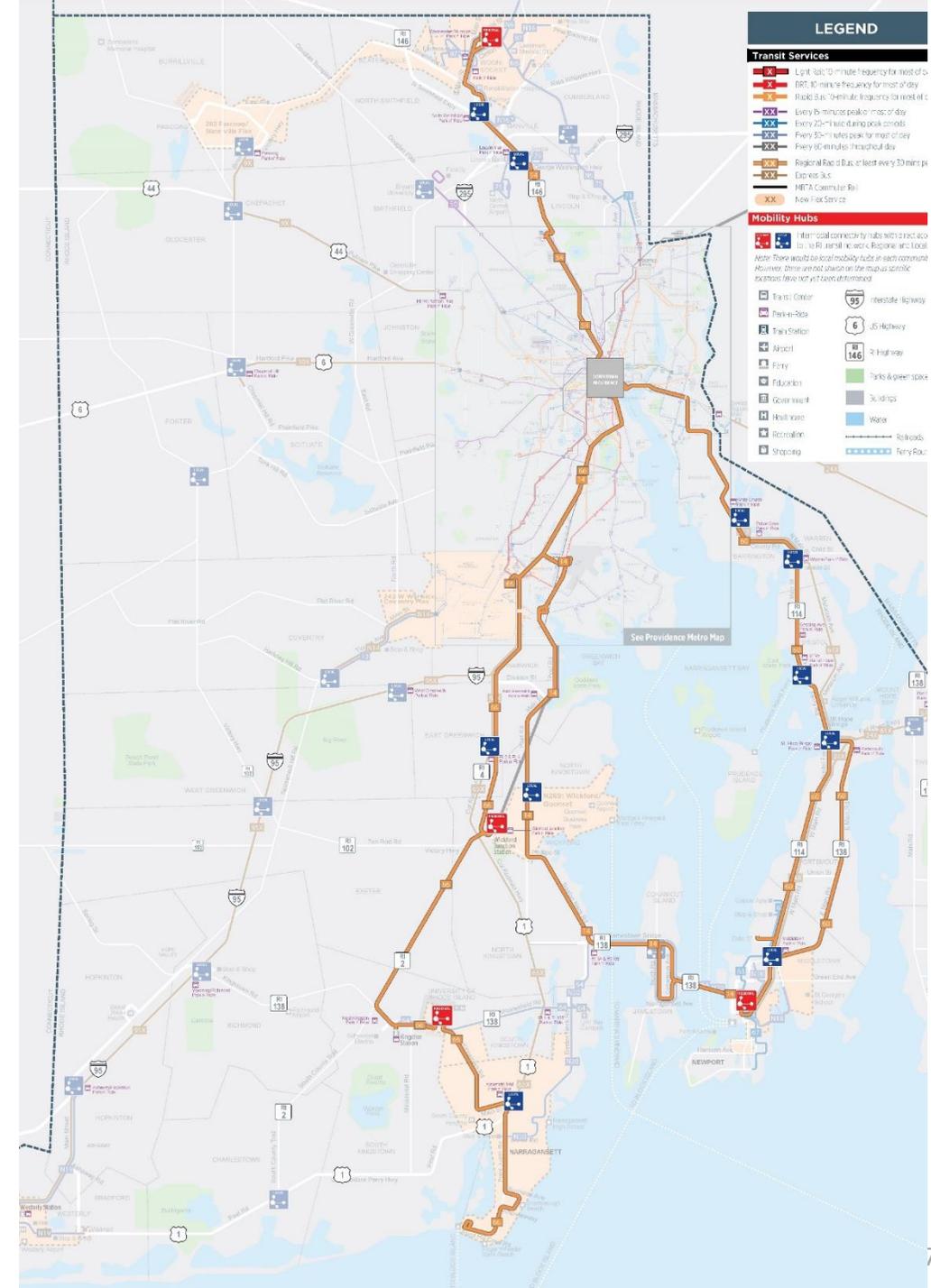
Demand in the region is so high that only high-capacity transit can effectively serve it

- Central Falls, Pawtucket, and Providence have some of the highest levels of transit demand in New England
- This ties to how the region was formed
 - Jobs and housing are located close to one another
 - Development follows historic streetcar alignments
 - Higher densities are seen here than many other regions in the U.S.
- RIPTA serves more riders than transit systems in many larger urban areas, including Kansas City, MO; Nashville, TN; and Indianapolis, IN



2 New HCT Lines will form the spine of planned statewide Frequent and Regional Rapid Bus Networks

- New HCT routes will replace and improve many existing north-south bus services in Metro Providence
- This frees up significant resources to be reinvested into making many more bus routes throughout the state run **more frequently for longer hours**
- RIPTA's planned **19-route Frequent Transit Network** will operate at least every 15-minutes all day long. It will include:
 - **6 additional Rapid Bus in Metro Providence** routes similar to R Line
 - **7 additional frequent local routes in Metro Providence and Newport**
- RIPTA's planned **4-route Regional Rapid Bus** network will upgrade existing regional routes to much more frequent, faster routes that operate every 30-60 minutes all day
 - Route 54 to Woonsocket, Route 66 to Narragansett, and Routes 14 and 60 to Newport



High-Capacity Transit confers benefits beyond increased speed, access, reliability...

When fully implemented, the Transit Forward RI plan will support:

Reducing emissions and improving **air quality**

155,300

metric tons reduction in greenhouse gas emissions

Furthering Rhode Island **climate initiatives**

8%

reduction in vehicle miles traveled as a result of a shift from driving to transit

A goal of the Rhode Island Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Plan is to reduce vehicle miles traveled by shifting people from driving to transit

19,000+

jobs created during plan (construction, manu...

nt jobs

\$560M+

increase in annual business output

\$2–5 billion

in transit-oriented development





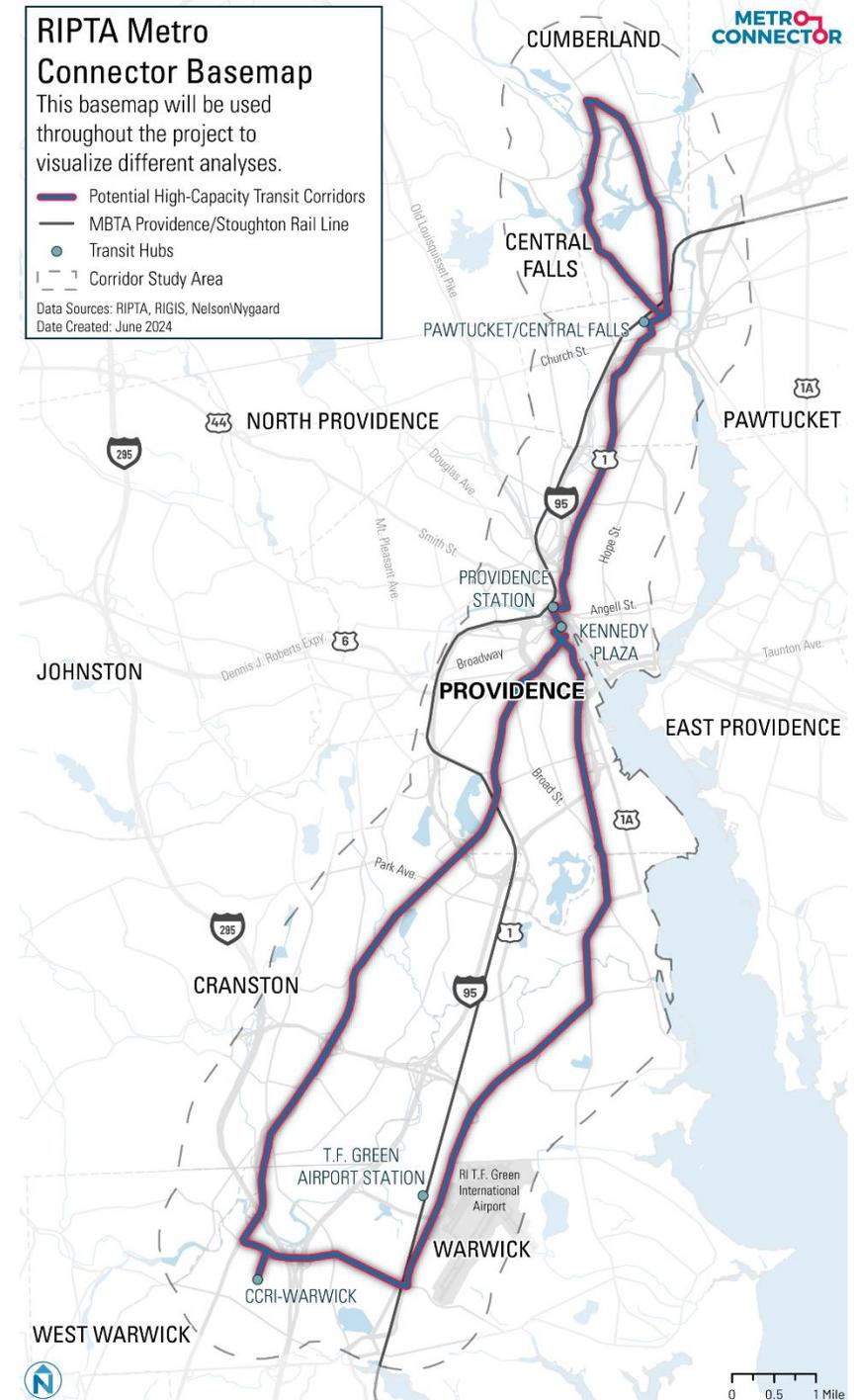
So, what is this project?

Our Project Purpose (draft)

The Metro Connector study aims to find ways to provide fast, frequent, and reliable transit that connects regional activity centers, neighborhoods, and major transportation hubs in the Providence area while achieving other state goals related to climate, sustainable housing growth, public health, and boosting the economy in a fair way.

What this project will do

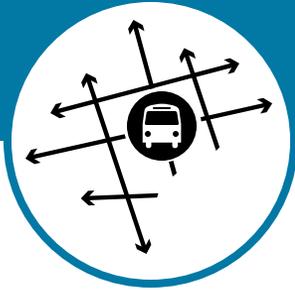
- We are assessing the potential for high-capacity transit connecting Cumberland, Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, Cranston, and Warwick
- There are two corridors
 - Cumberland/Central Falls to CCRI-Warwick via Providence
 - Providence to T.F. Green Airport
- Robust public engagement to ensure that the community’s vision is reflected in the locally preferred alternative for each corridor



Goals



Grow Transit
Ridership



Enhance
Connectivity



Advance Equity



Support
Sustainable
Growth

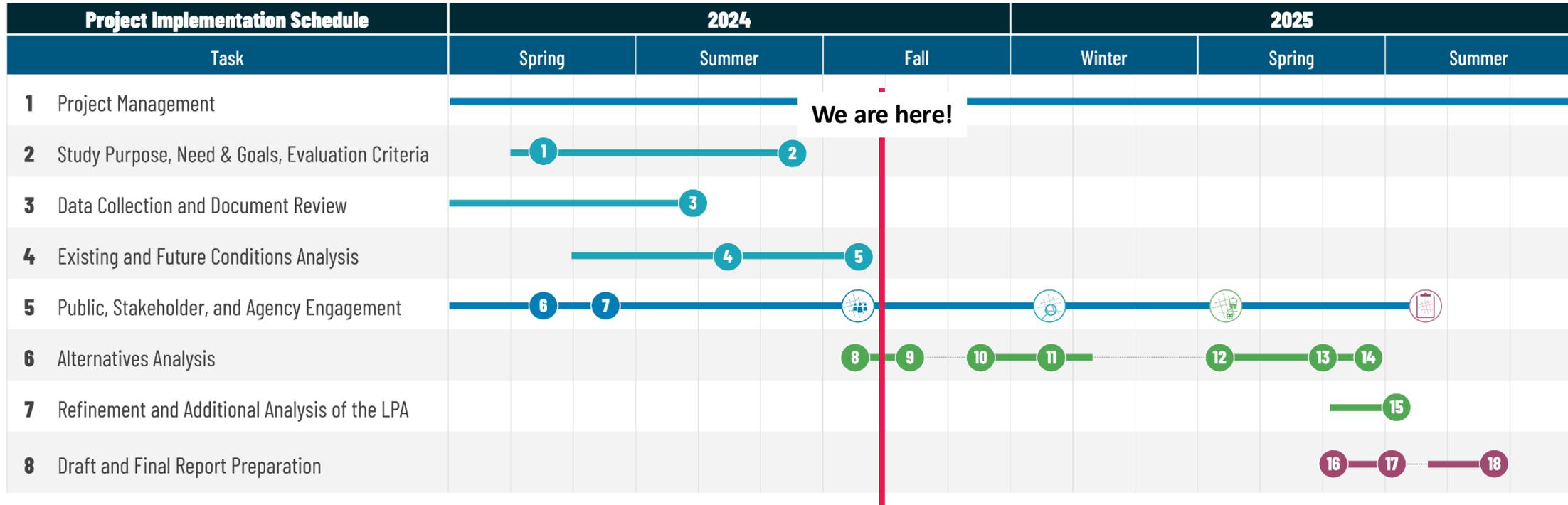


Focus on Practical
and Feasible
Solutions



Timeline and next steps

Timeline

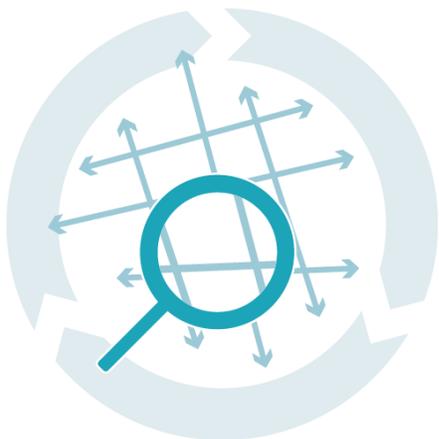


KEY MILESTONES AND DELIVERABLES

- 1** Draft Purpose and Needs Statement
- 2** Draft Evaluation Framework
- 3** Draft Plan and Policy Review
- 4** Draft State of the System Report
- 5** Final State of the System Report
- 6** Stakeholder Interviews
- 7** Walking Tour

- 8** Universe of Concepts
- 9** Screen Against Purpose & Needs
- 10** Develop Long List of Ideas
- 11** Tier 1 Evaluation
- 12** Develop Shortlist of Alternatives
- 13** Tier 2 Evaluation
- 14** Draft LPA
- 15** Refined LPA
- 16** Implementation Plan
- 17** Draft Final Report
- 18** Final Report

Project phases

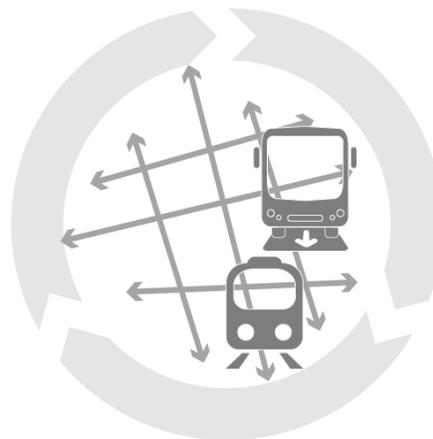


1. Understand

Months 1-6

- Our study area
- Conditions today
- Purpose and need, draft evaluation framework
- **Partner organization and stakeholder introductions**

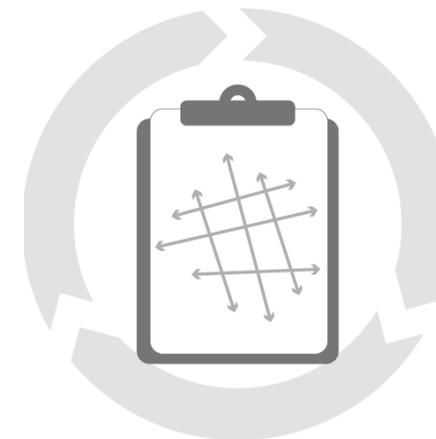
We are here!



2. Assess

Months 6-14

- Defining our alternatives
- Evaluate alternatives
- Select LPAs
- Refine LPAs
- **Public and stakeholder engagement**



3. Document

Months 14-16

- Approve LPAs
- Prepare implementation plan
- **Public and stakeholder engagement**

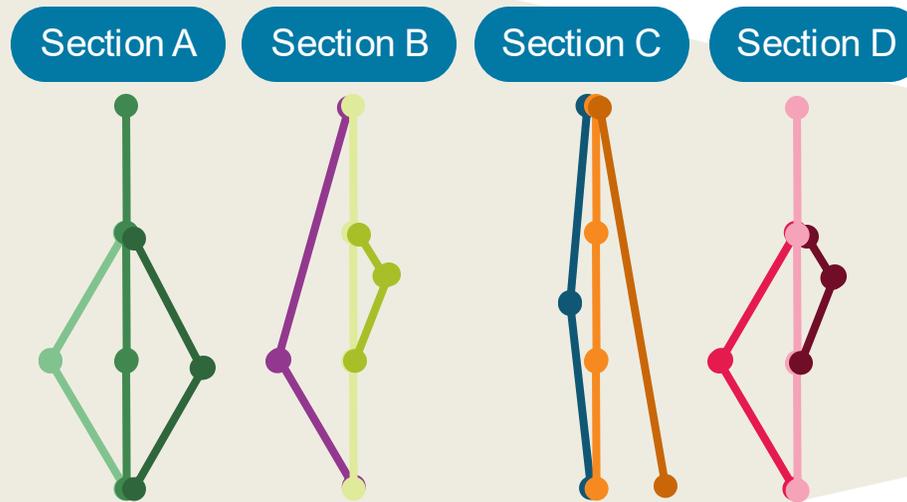
We are about to enter the Alternatives Analysis phase. What does this mean?

Step A: Screening



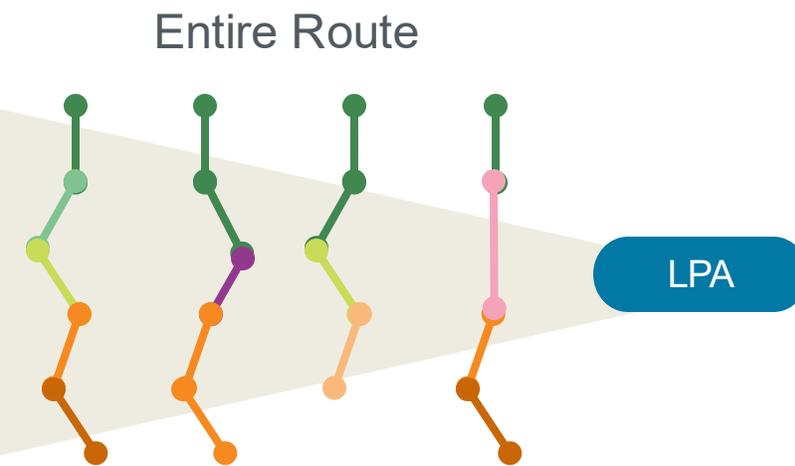
Review a wide range of ideas and remove those that don't meet the project purpose

Step B: Tier 1 Evaluation



Test different alignments in each section

Step C: Tier 2 Evaluation



Test best alignments as complete route

Update on public outreach

- **Project website:** ripta.com/metroconnector
 - Sign up to subscribe to email updates about meetings and events.
 - Most chapters of the Existing Conditions Assessment will be available online soon.
- **Project survey:**
 - The survey closed on October 17th. RIPTA and the consulting team received 435 responses.
- **Public meetings:**
 - Held 6 sessions: Pawtucket, West Warwick, Providence, Warwick, Central Falls, and Cranston.
 - Approximately 100 attendees.
- **Group meetings:** RIPTA is starting to schedule presentations and discussions on the Metro Connector with groups and organizations in the study area. If your organization is interested, please contact MetroConnector@ripta.com.

**METRO
CONNECTOR**

Questions?