



MAYOR BRETT P. SMILEY  
CITY OF PROVIDENCE

# SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

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November 18, 2024





MAYOR BRETT P. SMILEY  
CITY OF PROVIDENCE

# GREEN & COMPLETE STREETS ADVISORY COUNCIL

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November 18, 2024



# Agenda

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1. Roll Call
2. Approval of Minutes\*
3. GCSC Review Procedure
4. Old Business
  1. Update on Walk Signal Improvements
  2. Safe Streets For All Update\*
5. Announcements, Staff Updates, and Public Comment

*Asterisk indicates items listed as “for action”*



# ROLL CALL

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Item #1



# GCSC Members

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## Voting

- Rosie Jaswal
- Kathleen Gannon
- Alana Deluty
- Cedric Ye
- Allison Murray
- Julissa Arce
- Aislinn Hanley
- Denise Greenidge\*
- **Eloi Rodas\***

## Non-voting

- Alex Ellis (Planning)
- Nate Urso (DPW)
- Priscilla De La Cruz (Sustainability)
- Cpt. Luis SanLucas (Public Safety)
- Sam Daganhardt (City Forester)

\* Alternate member, votes if a full member is absent



# Sustainability Commission

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- Julian Drix
- Vatic Kuumba
- Jesus Holguin
- Kevin Essington
- Leandro Kufa Castro
- Chandelle Wilson
- Justice Gaines
- Greg Gerritt
- Enza Cucitrone

- Jaylyn McNeil
- Dwayne Keys

## **Dept of Sustainability staff (non-voting)**

- Priscilla De La Cruz
- Kevin Proft
- Sophie Worsh-Farnum



# APPROVAL OF MINUTES

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Item #2



# GCSC REVIEW PROCEDURE

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Item #3





# GCSC & Sustainability Commission

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- Both advisory
- Members of both residents & volunteers
- Both evolved from previous iterations
  - Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) → GCSC
  - Environmental Sustainability Task Force → Sustainability Commission
- Related scopes



# Enabling Ordinances

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## **GCSC**

- BPAC created 2012, Transformed 2021, revised 2023
- [Sec. 23-194](#)

## **Sustainability**

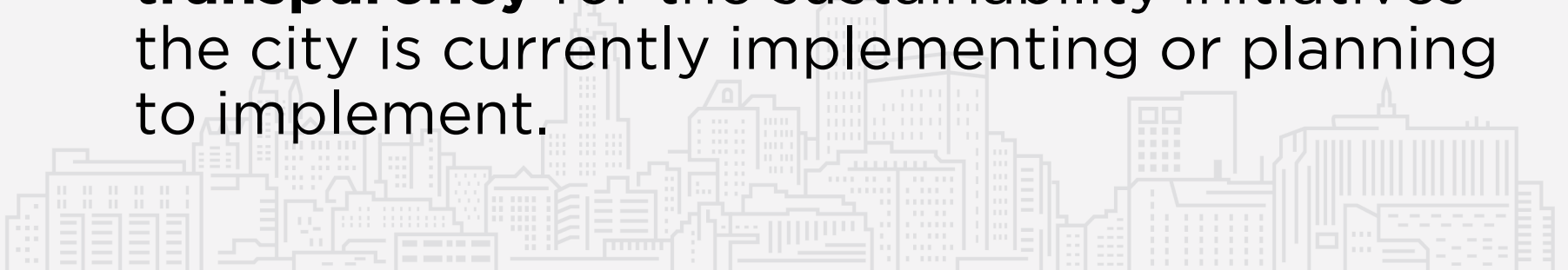
- ESTF created 2007, Transformed 2021
- [Sec. 2-144](#)



# Sustainability Commission Responsibilities

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1. **Advise** the council, mayor, municipal departments, and other boards and commissions on the city's sustainability and climate agenda;
2. Produce an annual report to the mayor and the council that highlights sustainability accomplishments from the previous year, **and community priorities going forward**;
3. Provide a level of **accountability and transparency** for the sustainability initiatives the city is currently implementing or planning to implement.



# GCSC Review Procedure

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- **Review of Conceptual & 30% Plans**  
During project development, make recommendations to improve design
- **All City activities:** annually review “all existing plans, manuals, checklists, decision-trees, rules, regulations, and programs”
- ***Waivers*** from requirements of ordinance  
*Mode-specific, GCSC approves or denies*
- ***Traffic calming:*** in edge cases, after traffic study, GCSC can recommend Traffic Engineer give “preliminary approval”



# Definitions (from ordinance)

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**Sustainability:** “a healthy, low-carbon, climate resilient and environmentally just city”

- Carbon neutrality
- Housing with affordable, efficient and clean energy, while eliminating fossil fuel use in all buildings;
- Healthy air and community spaces free from pollution, with a focus on port-area neighborhoods and other communities exposed to the highest rates of pollution;
- Zero-waste economy, with a focus on support for local businesses;
- Clean and efficient public transportation and infrastructure that support walking and bicycling, and otherwise reducing carbon and co-pollutants;
- Preparing the city for the impacts of climate change



# Definitions (from ordinance)

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**Green and complete streets:** streets that are designed and operated to enable safe equitable access for all users, in that **pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and public transportation users of all ages and abilities** are able to safely move along and across a street, provide for visual pleasure, including exposure to **natural elements**, promote cooling via robust tree canopy, and improve environmental quality by providing for reduction, accommodation, and on-site pretreatment of stormwater prior to eventual release into local waterways and the Narragansett Bay as part of a comprehensive stormwater management system.



# Definitions (from Climate Justice Plan)

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**Environmental Justice:** the right to a clean, safe and healthy quality of life for people of all races, incomes and cultures. Environmental justice emphasizes accountability, democratic practices, remedying the historical impact of environmental racism, just and equitable treatment, and self-determination. Environmental justice is achieved through the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, culture, immigration status, income, and educational level in the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of protective environmental laws, regulations, and policies of a place. Fair treatment means that no group of people should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, governmental, and commercial operations or the execution of federal, state, local, and tribal programs and policies. The concept of fair treatment includes the equitable distribution of environmental resources and burden.



# GCSC web page

<https://www.providenceri.gov/planning/gcsc/>

CITY OF PROVIDENCE



MAYOR BRETT SMILEY



CITY HALL

DOING BUSINESS

EVENTS

NEWS

PVD 311

EXPLORE

## Green and Complete Streets Advisory Council (GCSC)

### ABOUT

Streets and sidewalks carry not only people and goods, but also various utilities and stormwater runoff. City streets also represent a sizeable portion of the city's overall land use, house many of its publicly managed trees, and serve as windows into the city for visitors and residents alike. City streets and sidewalks must serve people of all ages and abilities, while creating more mobility and independence for young people, seniors, and people with disabilities. They serve motorists, non-motorists, residents in wheelchairs, parents pushing strollers, kids biking and walking to school, and people who can't afford to use, or prefer not to use motor vehicles.

The City of Providence will develop a safe, reliable, equitable, efficient, inviting, integrated and connected multimodal transportation system that will promote access, mobility and health for all users and abutters, while also improving environmental quality and reducing polluted stormwater runoff. The City will create a connected network of right-of-way facilities accommodating all modes of travel to the maximum practical extent. This network will promote walking and biking on city streets and sidewalks, provide access to public transportation, beautify and shade the City's parks, schools, healthy food retail establishments, and reduce and treat polluted stormwater.

The **Green and Complete Streets Advisory Council** was created by ordinance in July 2021. Its responsibilities are to:

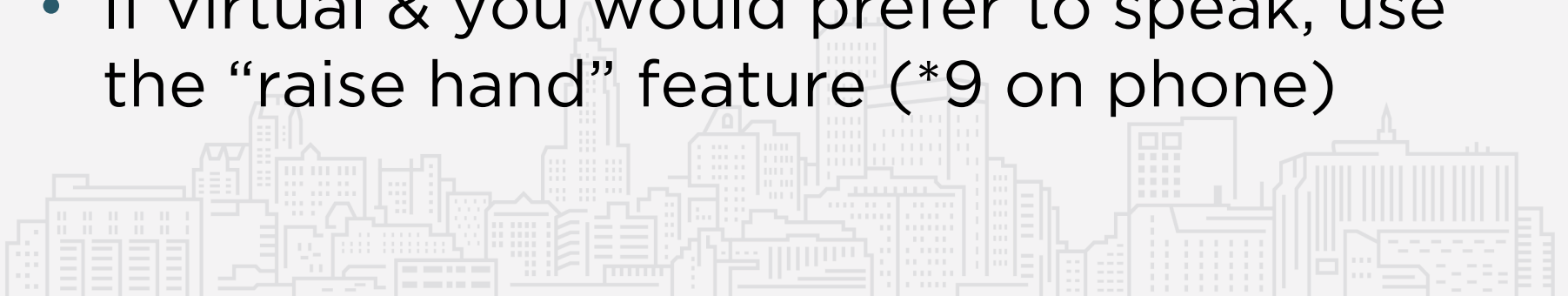




# Public comment

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- Opportunity during each item & for general topics at end of meeting
  - Wait for Chair to recognize you
  - Please keep comments to 2 minutes
- If participating virtually, put questions or comments in Q&A, staff or Chair will read them out
- If virtual & you would prefer to speak, use the “raise hand” feature (\*9 on phone)



# UPDATE ON WALK SIGNAL IMPROVEMENTS

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Item #4



# Status of Walk Signal Improvements

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- What is the status of signal improvements for pedestrian safety that GCSC recommended?
  - No Right Turn on Red
  - Plan for installing walk signals where absent
  - Adopting recommended standards



# LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN EQUITY ANALYSIS

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Item #5







# Agenda

Background

Environmental Justice Areas

Other Population Groups

Engagement Discussion

# Long-Range Transportation Plan Requirements



- **Vision** for Rhode Island’s multi-modal transportation system
- **Federally-required**
- **Long-range:** 20-year minimum planning horizon
- Public and stakeholder **engagement**
- **Fiscally constrained**



The plan we're updating





# Background



FHWA Order 6640.23A, FHWA Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Population

- Ensure plans and programs **“identify and avoid disproportionately high and adverse effects on low-income populations and minority populations.”**
  - Increased **Burdens**
  - Reduced **Benefits**

# Background



FHWA Environmental Justice Analysis in Transportation Planning and Programming Guidance, 2019

- Analyses tend to include:
  - Geographic Distribution: analyze magnitude of **proposed LRTP projects in EJ areas**
  - Impacts: **travel models** or other tools to forecast outcomes of proposed LRTP projects in EJ areas (e.g. VMT, congestion, pollution)

# Environmental Justice Areas



## Federally Required:

- People of color (based on U.S. Census)
- Low income (200% of poverty level)

## Federal Guidance

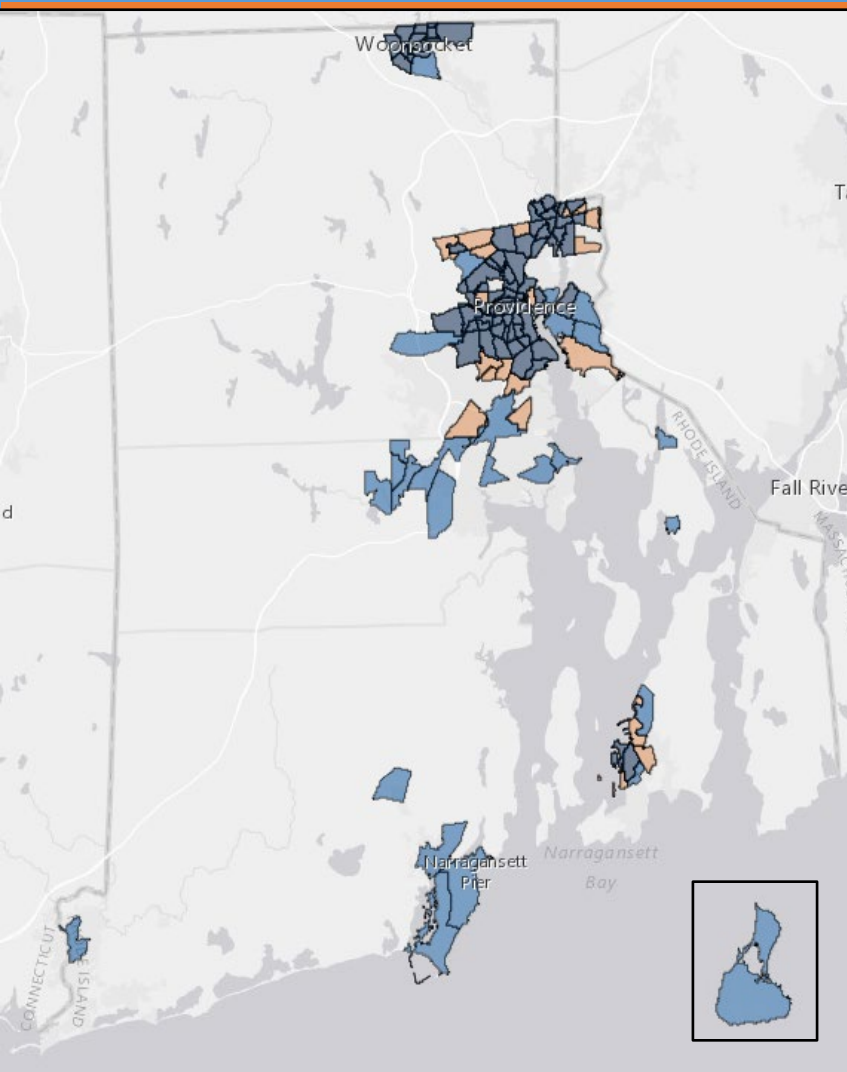
- Beware of watering down importance of these two indicators
- Beware “brightline thresholds”
- Use public engagement to inform



## Environmental Justice Areas

### EXAMPLE MAP: Averages (Low Income, People of Color)

- 117 tracts, 47% of tracts (not area)
- Thresholds:
  - 25.6% low income (**blue**)
  - 30.6% people of color (**orange**)
- More concentrated around urban areas
- Potential anomalies:
  - Universities
  - Narragansett
  - Block Island



# Other Population Groups



## Additional, optional analysis

- Way to consider important groups without “watering down” the importance of people of color and low income households
- Project-specific population groups, such as non-car projects:
  - Children
  - Zero Car Households

# Engagement Discussion

## Engagement Questions

- EJA / Population Groups
- What makes a project a “benefit” or a “burden” for your community?
- How else should equity and environmental justice be centered throughout the plan?



**Liza Farr**

Supervising Planner  
RI Division of Statewide  
Planning

*Liza.farr@doa.ri.gov*

# Engagement Discussion

How can we make sure this analysis is informed by people who live in potential EJAs?

- Survey 2 questions
- Outreach to HEZs
- Secondary Research – learn from Climate Justice Plan, HEZ plans, targeted LRTP engagement, (others?)
- WRWC / Olneyville Resilience Hub (TBD)
- Potential workshop with community/advocacy groups (TBD)
- Others?

# Thank you!

## Next Steps:

- **Equity Analysis Engagement:** Now – February
- **Drafting Plan:** Now – April 2025
- **Engagement on Draft Plan:** April – May 2025
- **Draft Final Plan:** May – July 2025
- **Submit Final Plan for Approvals:** August – November 2025



**Liza Farr**

Supervising Planner  
RI Division of Statewide  
Planning

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# SAFE STREETS FOR ALL (SS4A) UPDATE

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Item #6



# Safe Streets for All website

## Safe Streets for All

<https://www.providenceri.gov/safestreeets/>

Get on the email list to hear about  
Safe Streets Providence

Email\*

Submit

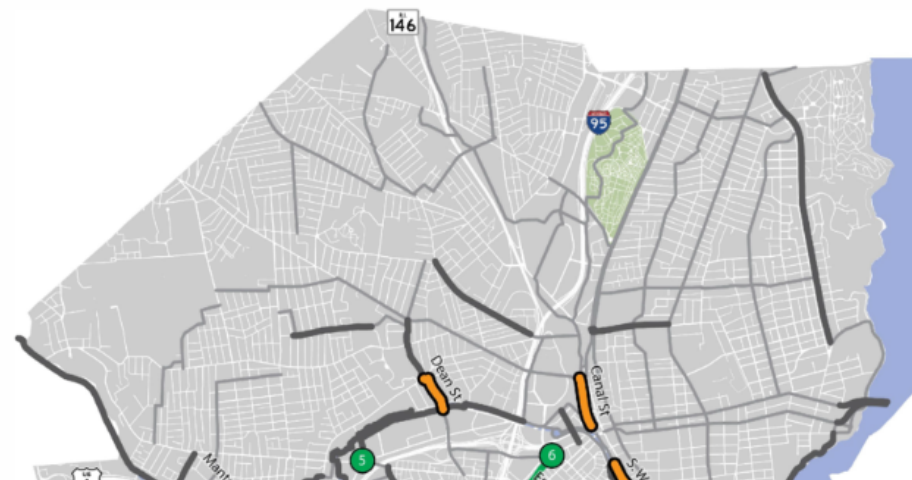
Providence is taking the next step toward safer streets.

In 2023 the City was awarded a “Safe Streets for All” grant to design, enhance and construct more than 3 miles of Urban Trails to add to the City’s existing network. This project will create last-mile connections to residential, employment, and cultural activity centers between the city’s 25 neighborhoods while significantly reducing fatal and serious crashes for vulnerable road users.

The trails are a combination of on-road and road-adjacent protected bicycle lanes and shared-use trails, neighborhood greenways on low-volume streets, and off-road shared-use paths.

The grant includes an update to the City’s Great Streets Plan, also referred to the Safety Action Plan, as well as design and construction of the following safety improvements:

- ▶ **Broadway:** conversion of existing bike lanes to a protected urban trail in line with designs proposed in the Great Streets Plan
- ▶ **South Water Street:** conversion of existing urban trail to sidewalk elevation
- ▶ **Fountain Street:** conversion of existing one-way protected bike lane to two-way protected urban trail with an extension to Biltmore Park across Dorrance Street and to Broadway via Greene Street
- ▶ **Olneyville Square:** intersection circulation and safety improvements and new urban trail connections through the Square
- ▶ **Washington Secondary Trail:** a new protected urban trail along the east side of RI-10 connecting Providence’s urban trail network with the Depot Street end of the Washington Secondary Trail in Cranston
- ▶ **Intersection of Eagle St, Atwells Ave, and Harris St:** safety improvements and evaluation of traffic efficiency improvements

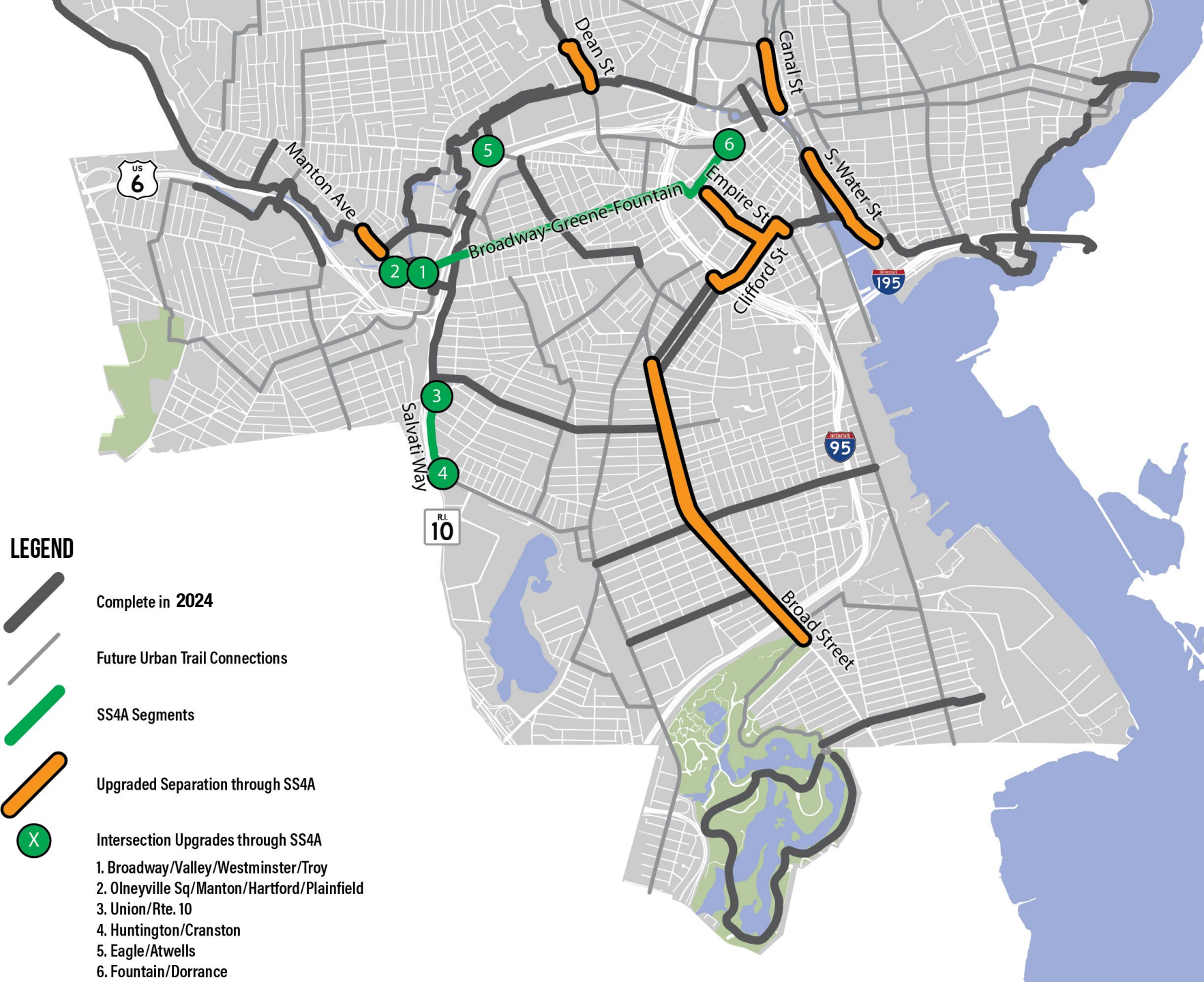


# SS4A Timeline






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- **Oct 2024:** First round of public meetings & survey
- **Early 2025:** Updated Safe Streets Action Plan complete
- **Spring 2025:** Second round of public meetings
- **2025/2026:** Construction beginning, depending on Federal approval timelines
- **End of 2027:** Project substantially complete





**LEGEND**

-  Complete in **2024**
-  Future Urban Trail Connections
-  SS4A Segments
-  Upgraded Separation through SS4A
-  Intersection Upgrades through SS4A
  1. Broadway/Valley/Westminster/Troy
  2. Olneyville Sq/Manton/Hartford/Plainfield
  3. Union/Rte. 10
  4. Huntington/Cranston
  5. Eagle/Atwells
  6. Fountain/Dorrance



# Draft Plan Structure

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- Plan Principles & Community Engagement
- Safety Data Analysis
- Urban Trail Network Updates & Pedestrian Safety Priorities
- Policy Recommendations & Roadmap to Vision Zero



# The Safe System Approach

- Approach to achieving Vision Zero
- Focus on layered systems-level solutions



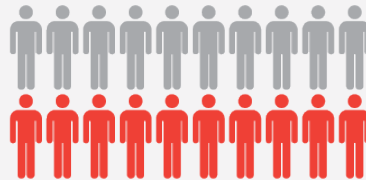
# Critical Role of Speed

20  
MPH



**13%** likelihood of **fatality or severe injury**

30  
MPH



**40%** likelihood of **fatality or severe injury**

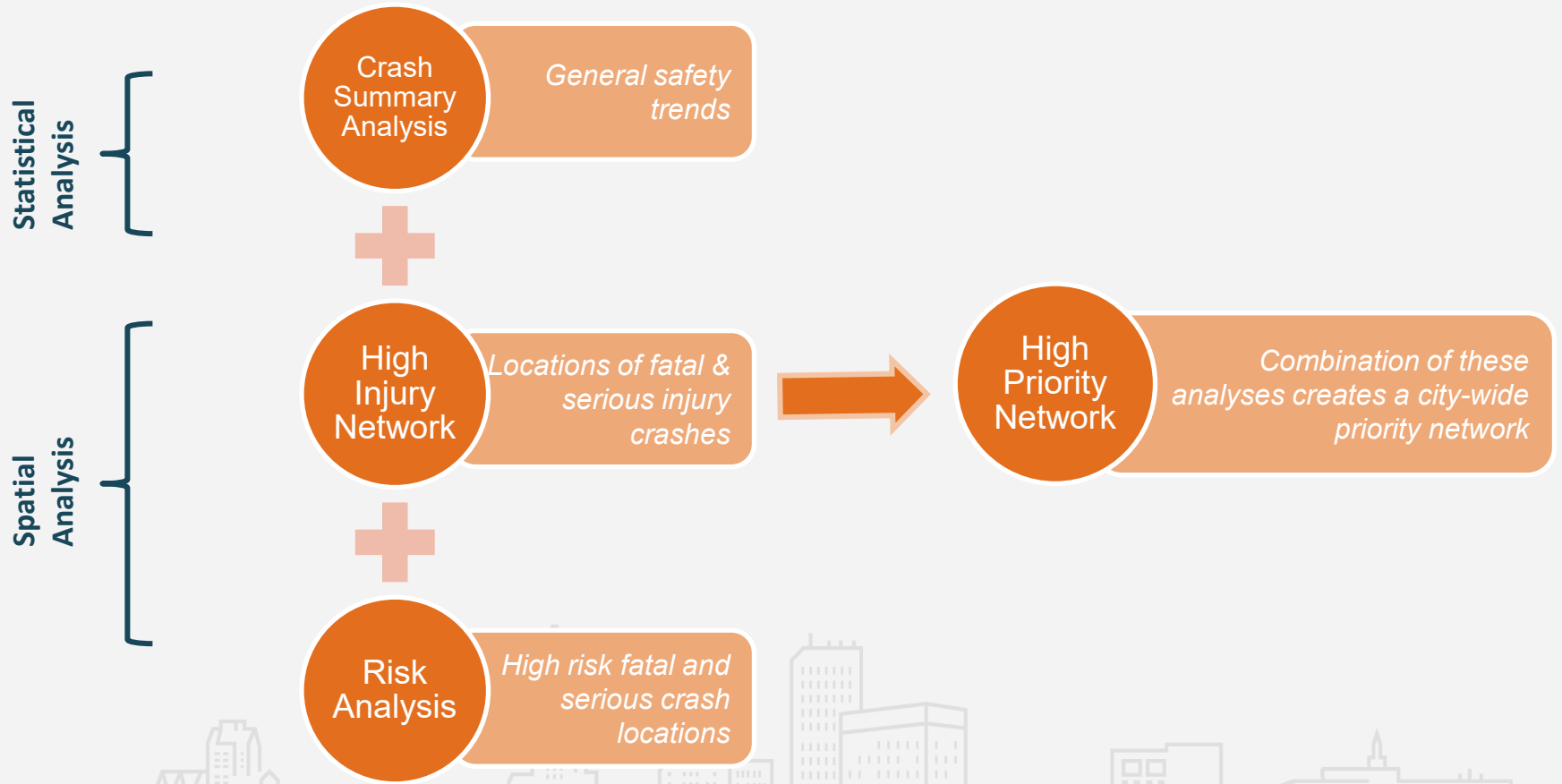
40  
MPH



**73%** likelihood of **fatality or severe injury**

Source: Tefft, B. C. *Impact speed and a pedestrian's risk of severe injury or death. Accident Analysis & Prevention.* 50. 2013.

# Safety Analysis Approach





# Vision Zero focuses on Fatal & Serious Injury crashes, a small subset of all crashes.

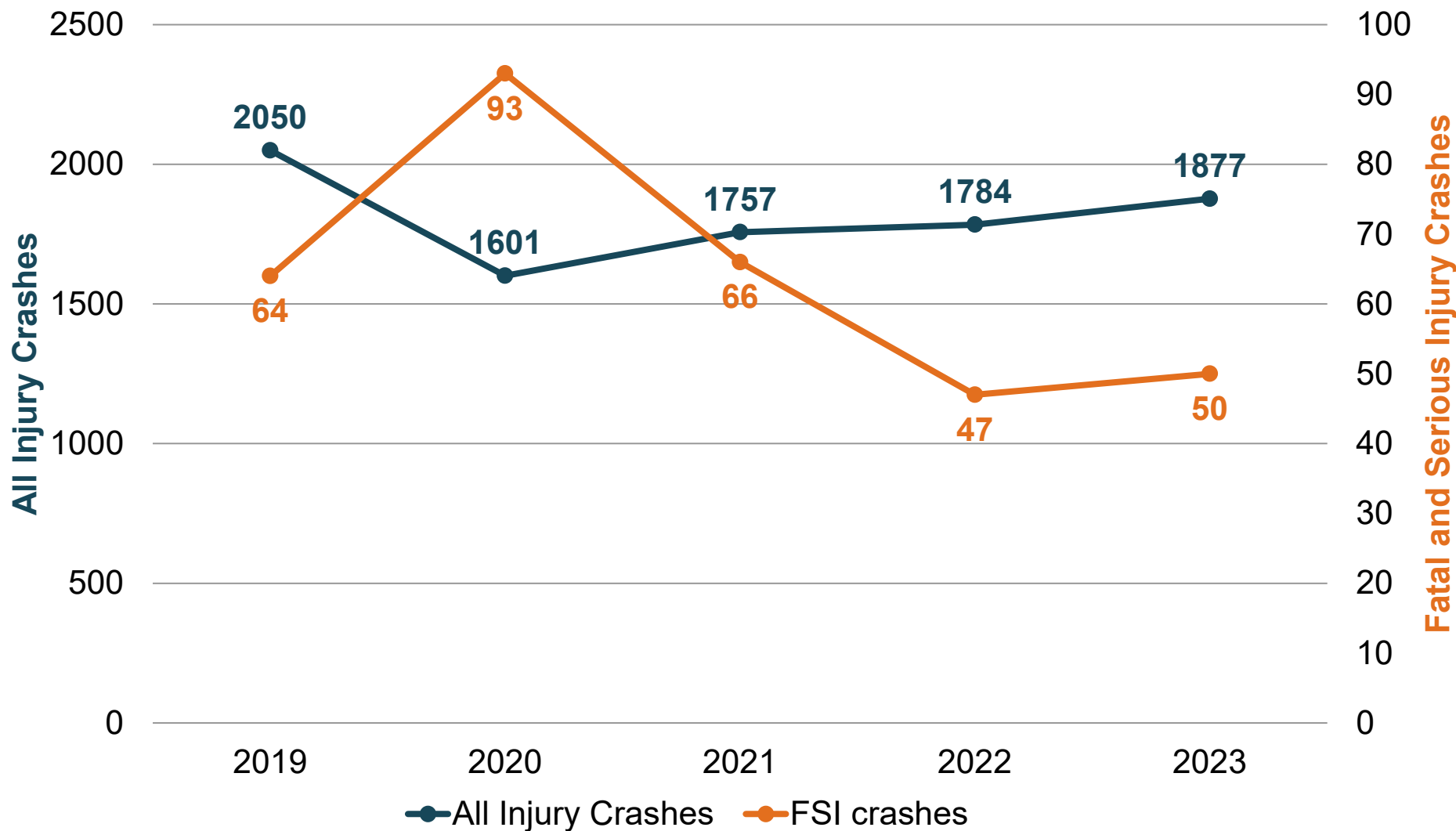
Crashes by Mode and Severity, 2019 - 2023

**Fatal Crashes: 36**  
**Serious Injury Crashes: 284**  
**Injury Crashes: 9,069**

	Motor Vehicle		Pedestrian		Bicycle		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Fatal</b>	21	0.27%	13	1%	2	0.61%	36	0.40%
<b>Serious Injury</b>	180	2%	91	10%	13	4%	284	3%
<b>Minor Injury</b>	476	6%	132	15%	69	21%	677	7%
<b>Possible Injury</b>	7178	91%	652	73%	242	74%	8072	89%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7855</b>		<b>888</b>		<b>326</b>		<b>9069</b>	

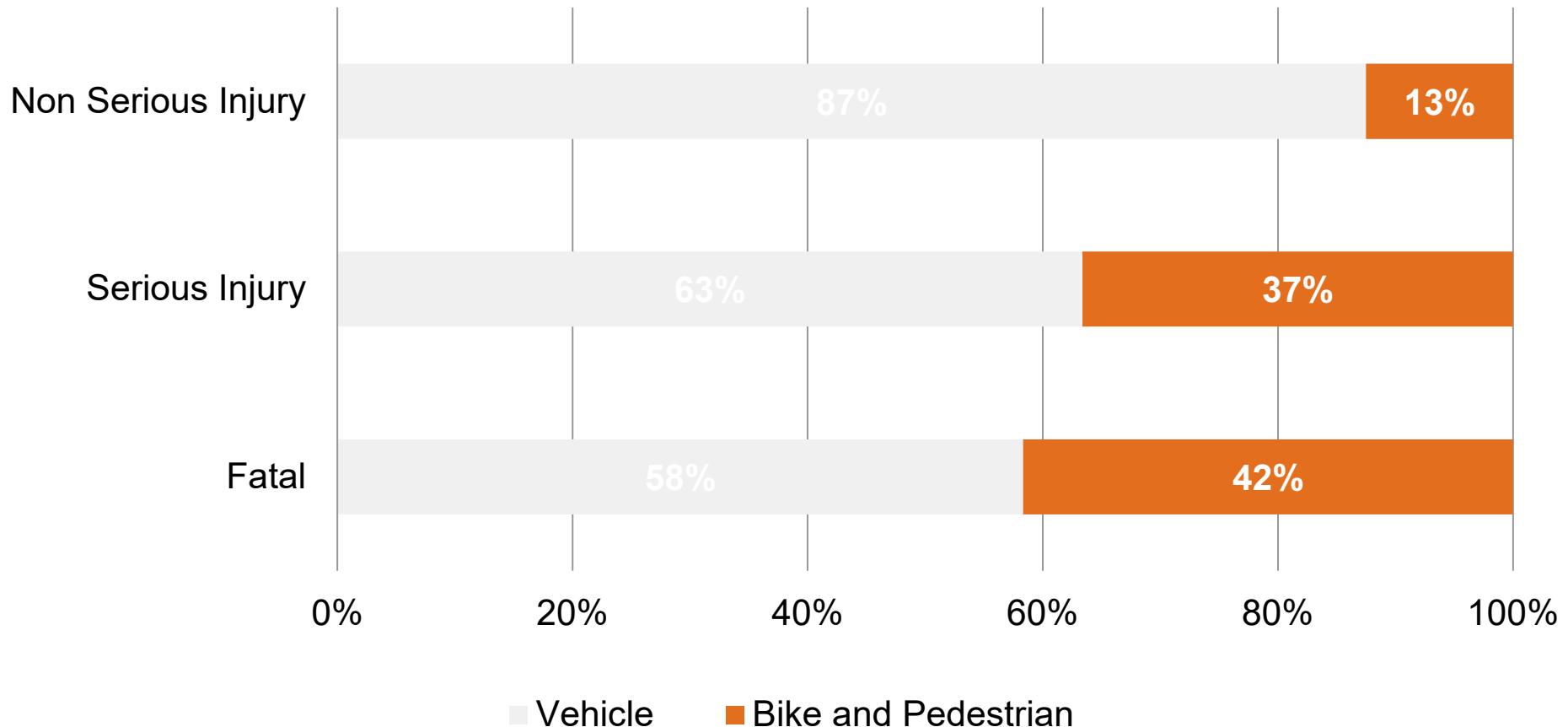


2020 saw the highest number of fatal and serious injury crashes, in a year that experienced a reduction in overall traffic.



**Bike and pedestrian crashes represent 14% of all injury crashes. However, these users are overrepresented in fatal and serious injury crashes.**

Crashes by Injury Severity for Vehicle and Bike and Pedestrian Crashes



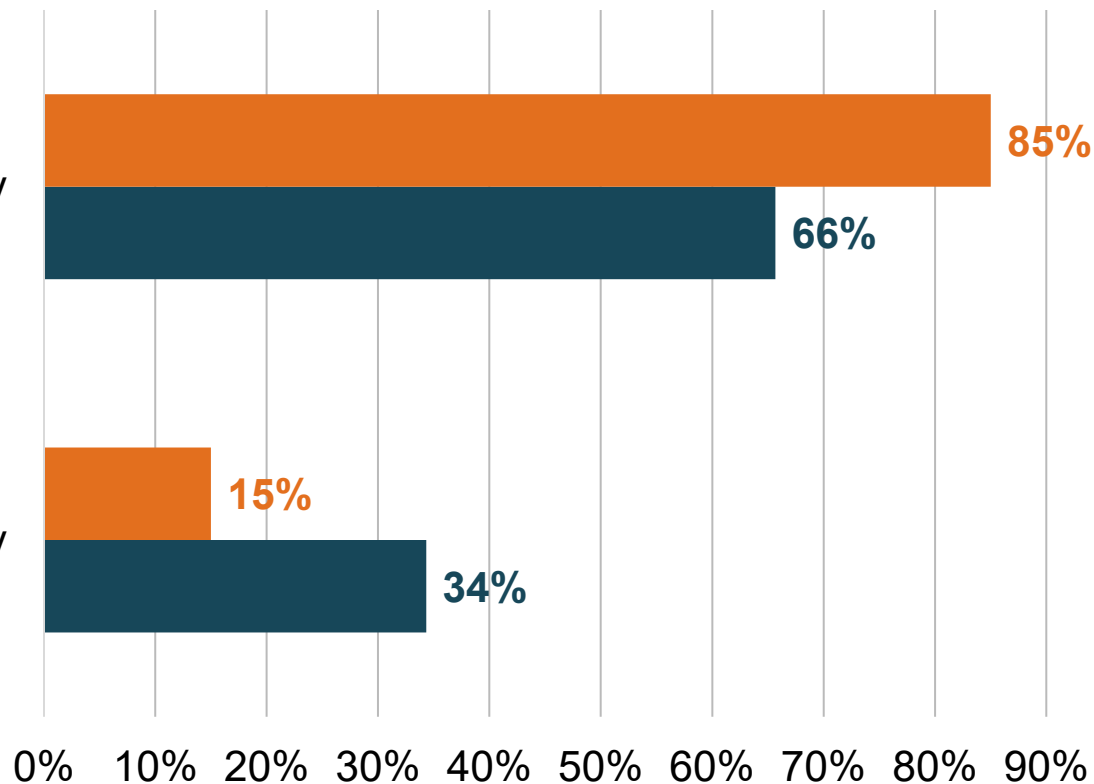
# Providence's most vulnerable residents are especially affected by severe crashes.

## Crashes in Disadvantaged Communities

Designated Disadvantaged Community

*Source: White House Climate and Environmental Justice Screening Tool*

Not Designated Disadvantaged Community

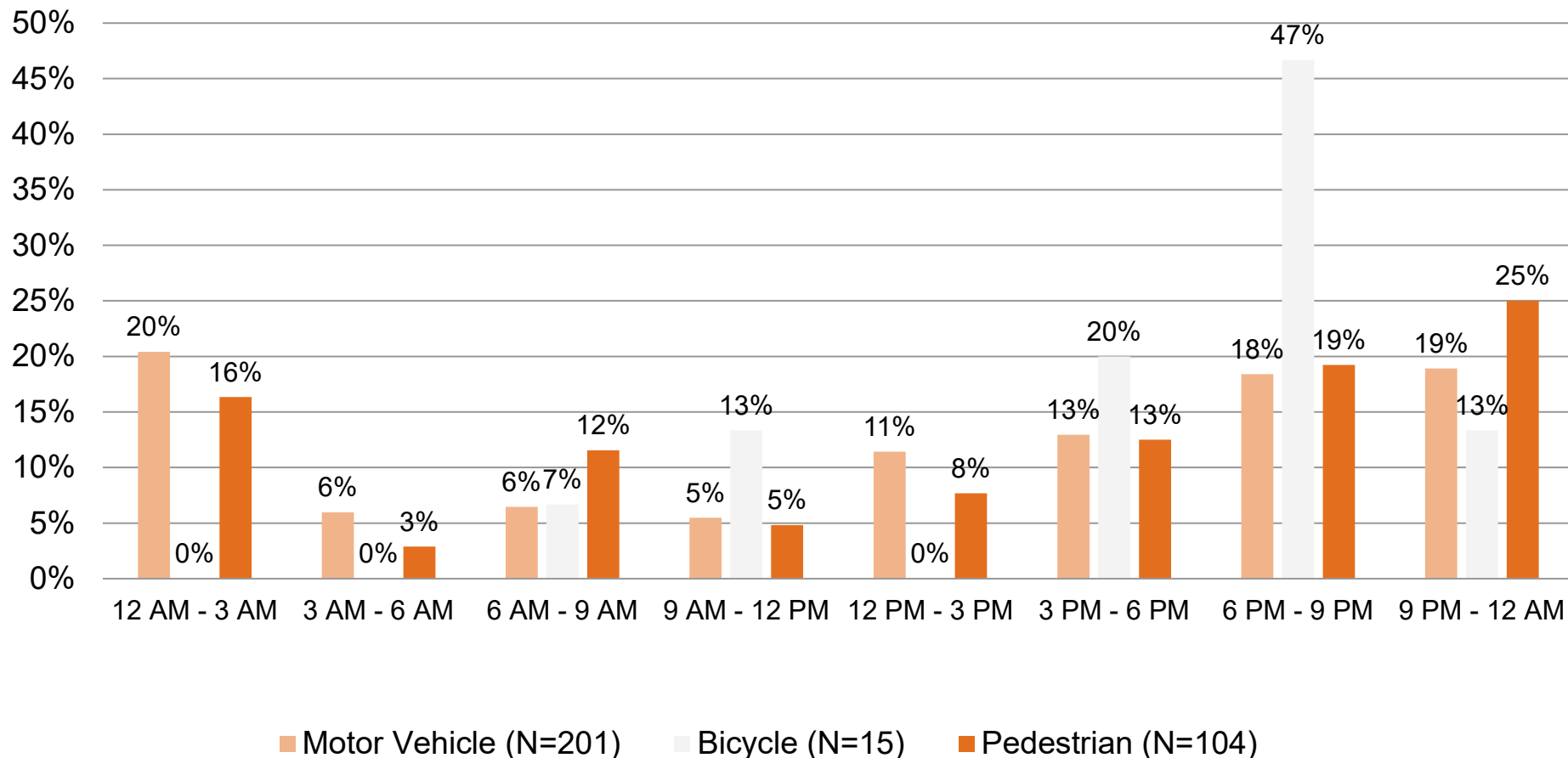


■ Share of Fatal and Serious Injury Crashes

■ Share of City by Area

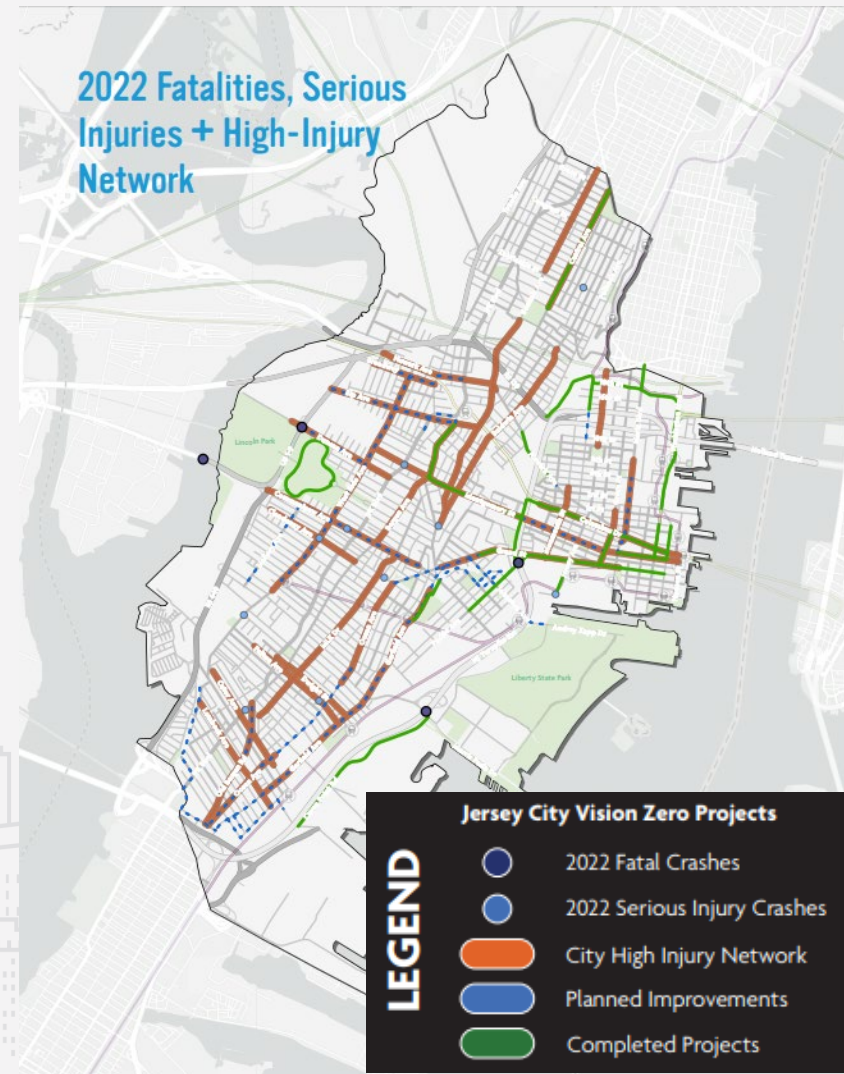
# Fatal and serious injury crashes involving bicycles and pedestrians occurred most in the afternoon and evening

Share of Fatal and Serious Injury Crashes by Mode and Time of Day



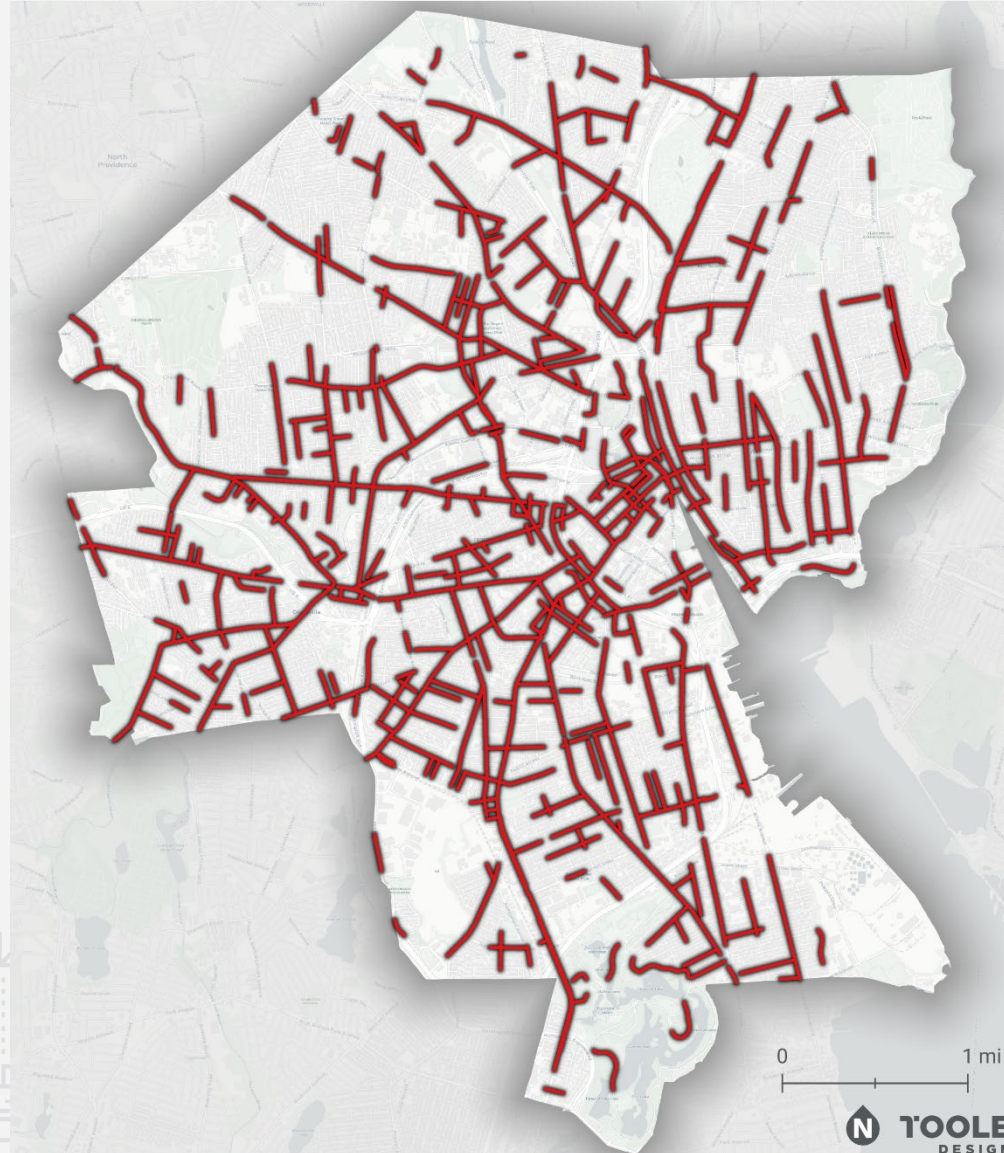
# Spatial Safety Analysis Overview

- Targeting projects/strategies where they can have the greatest impact
- Based on crash history and predicted risk
- Final product is High-Priority Network



# Draft High-Injury Network

- Streets where the most severe crashes have occurred
- 24% of the street network, that from 2019-2023 saw:
  - 33 out of 36 fatal crashes
  - 93% of serious injury crashes

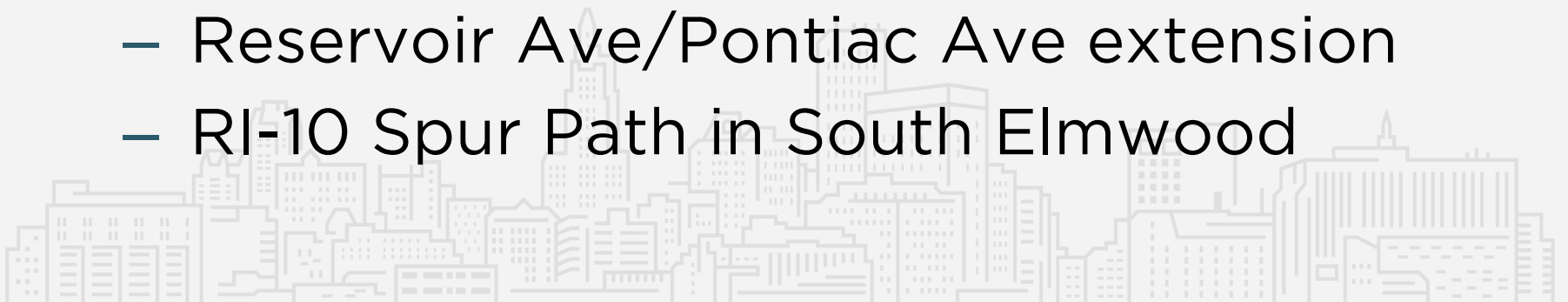




# Urban Trail Network Update

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- Focus on IDing best additions to connect all residents to network
- Other proposed additions:
  - Melrose Street neighborhood greenway
  - India Street connector
  - Butler Ave unprotected bike lanes
  - Morris Ave neighborhood greenway
  - Reservoir Ave/Pontiac Ave extension
  - RI-10 Spur Path in South Elmwood



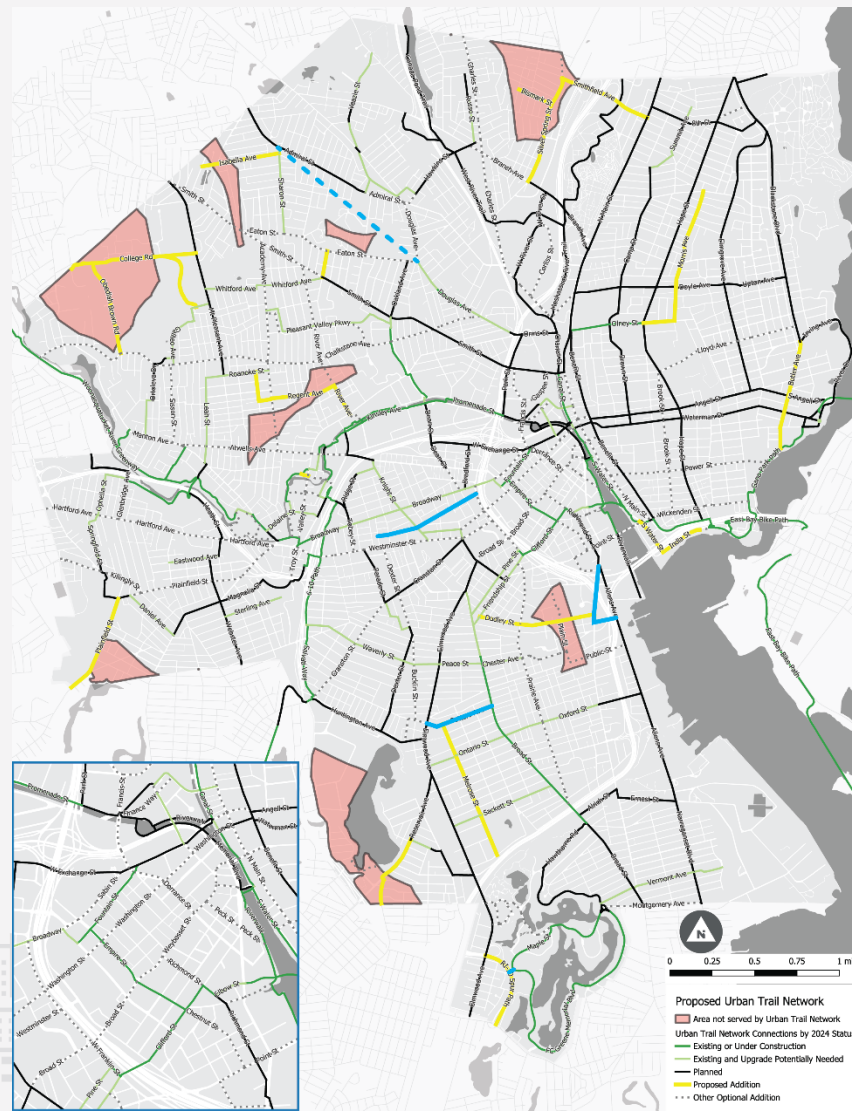


# GCSC Comments 10/10/24

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- Connect Hospital District to Point St & satellite buildings on Eddy St
  - Connect Broad St & Elmwood Ave near Potters Ave
  - Connect the Douglas Ave/Eaton St intersection with Admiral St/Sharon St intersection
  - Extend Dudley St addition to Allens Ave
  - Add Carpenter Street
  - Connect Rte 10 path to Roger Williams Park at Hamlin St/Temple Ave bridge
- 

# Urban Trail Network Update





College Rd  
Obadiah Brown Rd

Isabella Ave  
Admiral St

Regent Ave  
River Ave

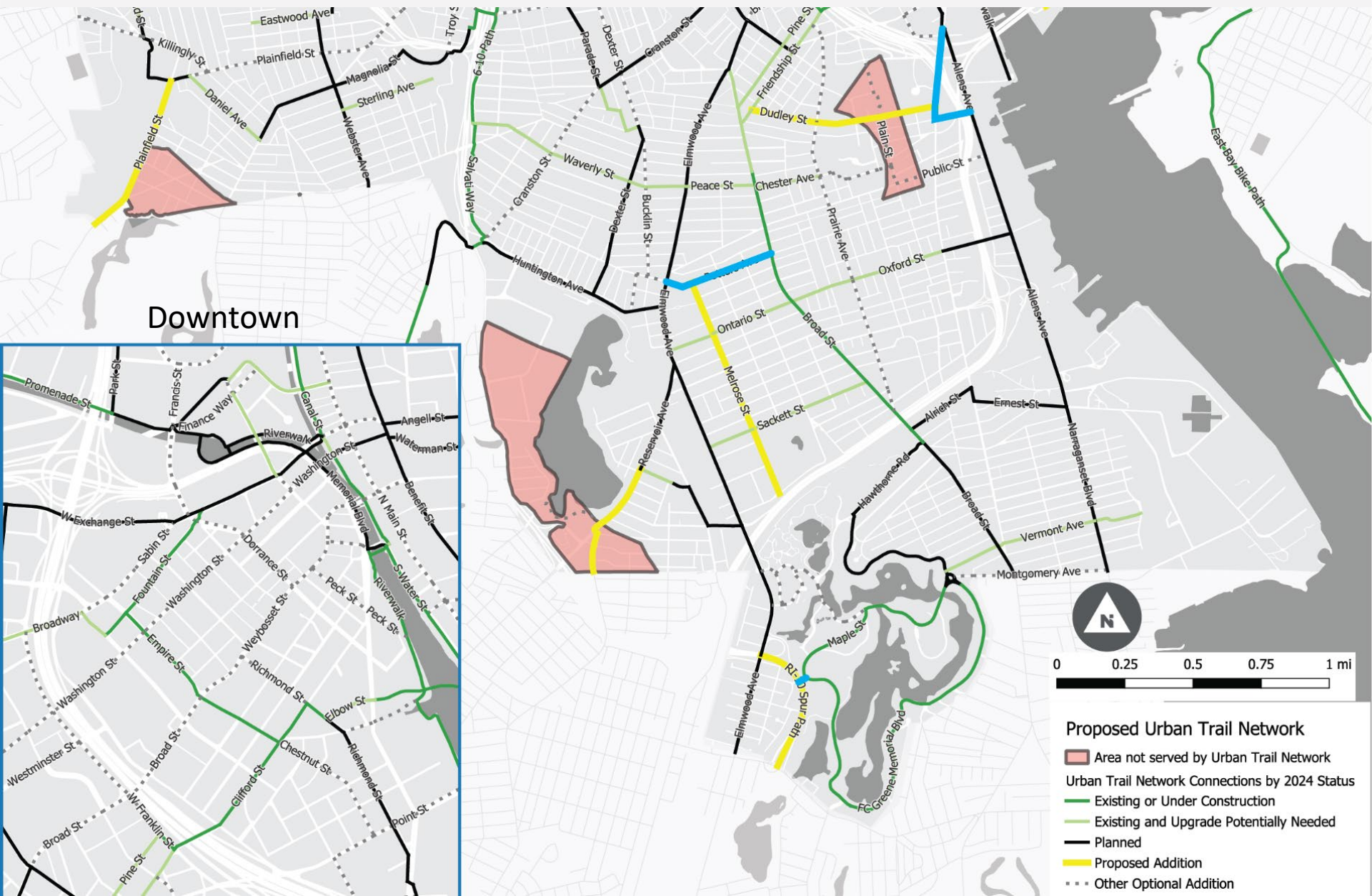
Bismark St  
Silver Spring St

Broadway

India St

East Bay Bike Path





# Policy Recommendations Update

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- Based on draft Comprehensive Plan, Great Streets Plan, Climate Justice Plan, and evolving best practice
- Grouping similar strategies from different sources
- Public comments influencing evolving draft
- Will summarize precedents from other cities and what research suggests impact would be if implemented here



# Comp Plan Mobility Section

[providenceri.gov/comp-plan/](https://providenceri.gov/comp-plan/)

Mobility Chapter: page 34



**What is the Comprehensive Plan?**



**What Are We Hearing So Far?**



**How Can I Participate?**

## UPDATES

The Providence City Council's Committee on Ordinances approved the [amended Comprehensive Plan](#) on Monday, October 21st.

The Comprehensive Plan is expected to receive its first vote in front of the City Council on November 7th.

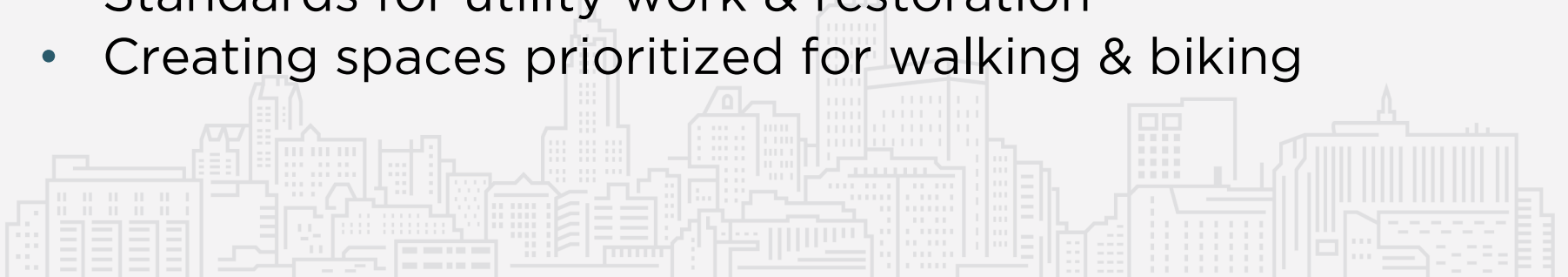
An interactive version of Map 11.3 "Base Zoning Map Changes" from the Plan (as amended on 10/21/24) is available [here](#).



# Categories of recommendations

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- Traffic signal standards & improvements
- Crosswalk safety improvements
- Improve maintenance
- Revise State & Local laws on mobility
- Enhance programming to encourage walking & biking
- Increase enforcement of dangerous driving & parking
- Transit, pollution, and EV recs from Climate Justice Plan
- Parking
- Shared mobility (e.g. Zipcar and Spin)
- Incentives for safer mobility choices
- Standards for utility work & restoration
- Creating spaces prioritized for walking & biking



# GCSC Comments 10/10/24

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- Making “No Turn on Red” the default citywide unless signs say otherwise
- Amend State law on speed cameras to allow outside school zones
- Include goal to reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)
- Integrate final recommendations of Stormwater Task Force





# Recommendations not in Comp Plan

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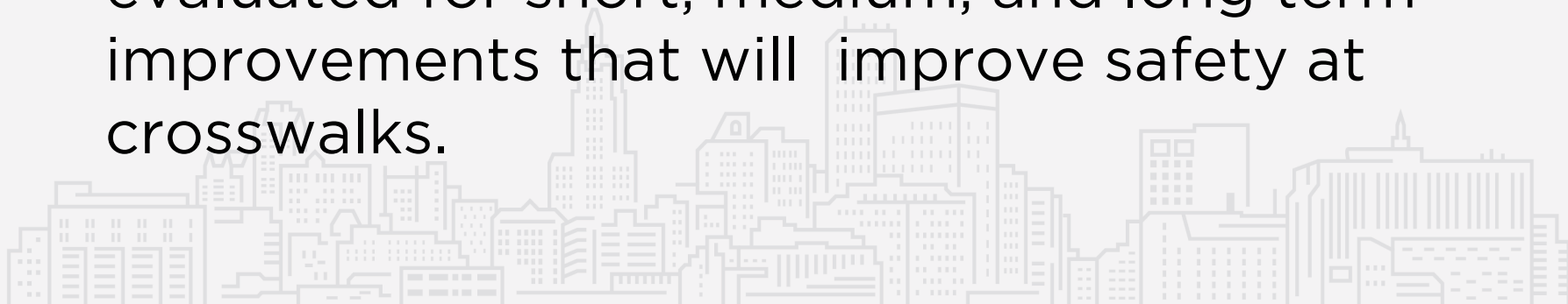
- **Determine and implement standards for crosswalk comfort and accessibility in priority areas:** Determine a standard acceptable distance between crosswalks depending on a street's context, and create a prioritized list of new crosswalks to add based on these standards. Identify thresholds for enhanced crossing treatments like Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons (PHBs), Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs), and raised crossings. Identify key destination types where new midblock crossings should be considered to enhance safety of pedestrians accessing those destinations. Consider how to integrate these standards into development, restoration, or other roadway projects.



# Recommendations not in Comp Plan

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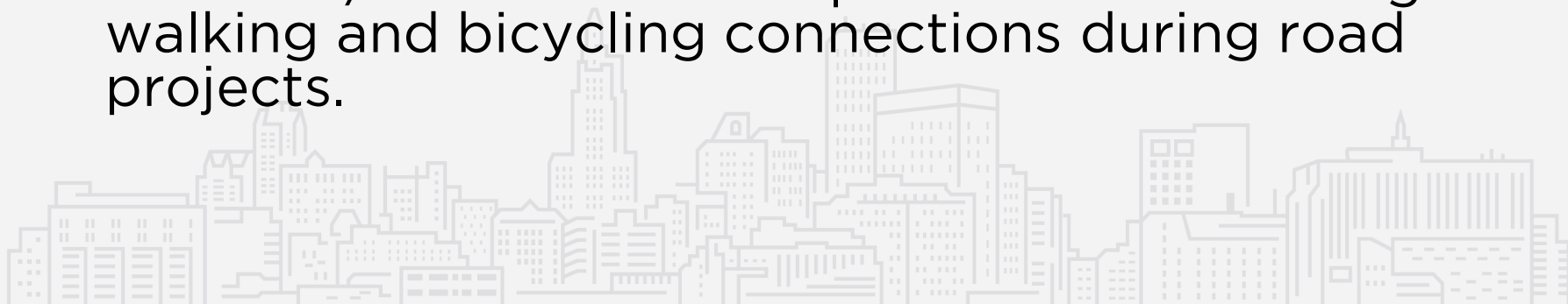
- **Improve street lighting of crosswalks, sidewalks, and urban trails:** A disproportionate share of serious collisions in Providence occur at night, and recent investigation of North Main Street revealed illumination levels at crosswalks below recommended thresholds. In areas of high collisions or high pedestrian volumes, existing lighting conditions should be evaluated for short, medium, and long term improvements that will improve safety at crosswalks.



# Recommendations not in Comp Plan

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- **Establish procedures to address sidewalk obstructions and avoid new obstructions:** The City should inventory permanent sidewalk obstructions such as utility poles, guy wires, or utility cabinets, and implement a plan for addressing them. For recurring temporary obstructions such as outdoor dining, business signage, overgrowth of plantings, or waste receptacles, the City should establish procedures and work with abutters to find alternatives. Standards should also be established and enforced for construction detours and sidewalk/lane closures to prioritize maintaining walking and bicycling connections during road projects.



# Recommendations not in Comp Plan

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- **Work with the State Legislature to adopt changes to State Law to improve safety:**  
Advocate for such changes as adoption of an “Idaho Stop” law, allowing bikes to proceed during a Leading Pedestrian Interval, revision of “Frank’s Law” to be a 4 ft passing distance, clarification that both Class 1 and Class 2 e-bikes are allowed on bike paths, requirement of helmets for adult motorcyclists, requirement of “lateral protection devices” to improve large truck safety, and removal of the exemption for delivery and ride-share vehicles to laws about parking in bike lanes and on sidewalks.



# Recommendations not in Comp Plan

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- **Update ordinance language for operating a bicycle:** Some language in the Code of Ordinances about bicycles date from 1946 and is significantly out of date. Clarify language around conflicts between bicycling and walking, and remove outdated and unenforced bans on carrying passengers, riding next to others, and riding in parks.



# Recommendations not in Comp Plan

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- **Expand Youth Bicycle Education Programming to Citywide:** The City should work with nonprofit partners to teach youth bicycling skills at recreation centers or other suitable venues in line with the 2017 “Pedal Power” program.



# Recommendations not in Comp Plan

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- **Expand the City's Street Ambassador Approach to Public Engagement:** The City should invest more in the Street Ambassador program to hire, train, and deploy community members at events and in everyday environments to collect input on projects being planned or considered, and spread awareness of opportunities for further engagement. Street Ambassador approaches allow cities to engage thousands of community members who otherwise would likely not be engaged in traditional planning processes. Street teams should also be used to publicize reduced-fare programs for the City's bike share and scooter share.



# Recommendations not in Comp Plan

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- **Provide the Traffic Bureau the personnel resources to conduct nighttime enforcement:** Increase the size of the Traffic Bureau and fill any position vacancies. Create a DUI/Speeding Task Force within the Traffic Bureau to address Night/Weekend Operations when fatalities are most likely to occur.
- **Conduct ongoing law enforcement campaigns along high-crash corridors and report changes in crash type, crash severity, and contributing behaviors over time:** Develop enforcement operations plan for priority sites.
- **Provide resources and training to officers on the importance of properly filling out crash reports, laws related to vulnerable road users and positive enforcement methods:** Increase the number of officers attending training on pedestrian bicycle laws, crash causes and contributing factors, roll call videos, VZ strategies and significance of accurately filling out crash reports.





# Recommendations not in Comp Plan

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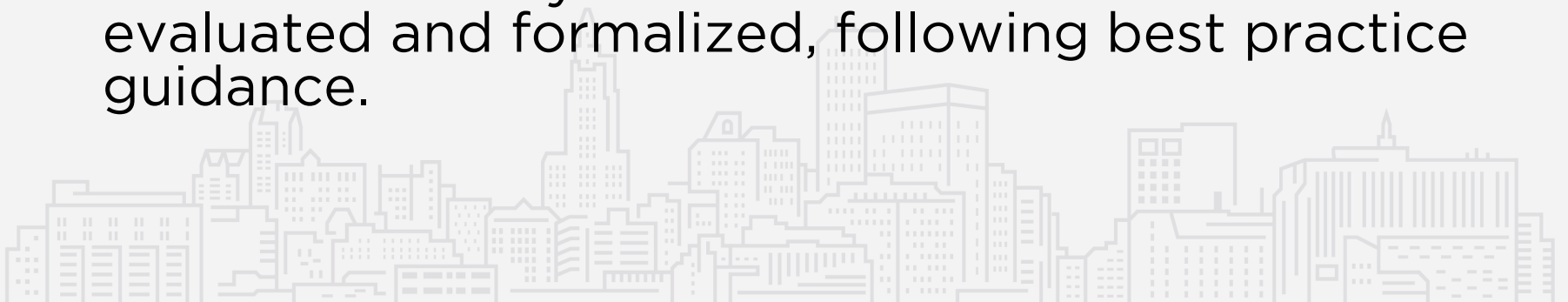
- **Create supplementary plans for mobility topics not addressed in this plan:** Create a citywide mobility plan that builds upon existing plans addressing such topics as EV infrastructure and EV ride sharing, as well as a plan for improving the public right-of-way to be accessible in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Public Right Of Way Accessibility Guidelines



# Recommendations not in Comp Plan

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- **Establish street design standards consistent with safety best practice and implement whenever capital, maintenance, or restoration work allow:**  
At locations where pedestrians must cross motor vehicle traffic, pedestrian safety should explicitly be prioritized over traffic flow. Clear, quantified benchmarks of traffic congestion should be established as the only exceptions to default pedestrian safety measures. Define a target level of pedestrian crossing stress for all intersections, according to a set of criteria. Existing procedures to balance safety and traffic flow should be evaluated and formalized, following best practice guidance.



# Recommendations not in Comp Plan

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- **Update agreements and standards for road and sidewalk opening standards to capitalize on project opportunities for Great Streets implementation:** Utility construction and road patches once work is complete should be evaluated to ensure small opportunities to improve safety are not being missed. Road opening permits and utility agreements should be evaluated to ensure that suitable safety is provided during road closures and detours, and that walking and biking infrastructure is restored in a timely fashion.



# Recommendations not in Comp Plan

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- **Expand car-sharing coverage throughout the city:** Car-sharing is available to the general public in approximately 30 Zipcar locations throughout the city, primarily clustered Downtown and on College Hill. To be usable by more people, opportunities should be evaluated to add shared vehicles accessible to the public within a quarter-mile walk of as many City residents as possible.



# Recommendations not in Comp Plan

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- **Discourage large vehicles by considering weight-based fees that reflect the increased safety risk, climate harm, and road damage large vehicles create:**  
Large vehicles contribute a disproportionate amount to street safety issues, pollution, and damage to roadways. The City should incentivize smaller vehicles, starting by ensuring city fleet vehicles and contractors' vehicles meet emerging direct vision standards and are equipped with safety devices such as side guards ("lateral protective devices"). Additional incentives could take the form of registration fees, excise taxes, parking fees, speeding tickets, working with the State on tiered highway tolls, or other road user fees scaled to the weight of the vehicle.



# ANNOUNCEMENTS, STAFF UPDATES, PUBLIC COMMENT

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Item #7



# POTENTIAL TOPICS FOR FUTURE JOINT MEETINGS

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Item #8



# THANK YOU

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City of Providence

