

RIPTA Strategic Planning Overview of Related Documents

To support the efforts of the Strategic Planning Subcommittee of RIPTA's Board of Directors, an overview of related documents is provided below. Documents are organized into nine different categories, as follows:

1. RI General Assembly: Key Legislation and Resolutions Affecting RIPTA
2. RIPTA Financing / Statewide Transportation Funding
3. Outside Audits & Peer Reviews
4. Statewide Planning Documents
5. RIde Program / Human Services Transportation
6. Commuter Resources RI / Transit Incentives
7. Other RIPTA Reports & Planning Documents
8. Transit Enhancement & Expansion Studies / Projects
9. Commuter Rail Studies / Documents

1. RI General Assembly: Key Legislation and Resolutions Affecting RIPTA

- **[RIPTA Enabling Legislation RIGL §39-18 \(1964\)](#)**
The General Assembly created RIPTA in 1964 (RIGL §39-18) ending privatization of the state's transit system. RIPTA began operations on July 1, 1966. This enabling legislation was recently updated in response to the Special Legislative Committee on Transit's 2007 recommendation to designate RIPTA as Rhode Island's Mobility Manager and to provide a broadened scope and mission for the Authority.
- **[Establish Statewide Wheelchair Accessible Transportation Service \(2009\)](#)**
In April 2009, the RI House passed a resolution (2009-H6129) directing RIPTA (in consultation with the Division of Public Utilities and Carriers and the Governor's Commission on Disabilities) requested RIPTA report on the establishment of a statewide wheelchair accessible transportation service. A detailed plan was to be submitted September 1, 2009. The program would be funded by FTA's New Freedom initiative.
- **[Traffic Control Devices/Authority to Extend Green Lights \(2009\)](#)**
In June 2009, the General Assembly amended RIGL § 31-13, an act related to Traffic Control Devices, to allow RIPTA buses to carry and use devices to extend the duration of green light signals. RIPTA is planning to use this technology along the proposed Broad/N. Main Rapid Bus Corridor and potentially in other high priority corridors.
- **[Clean Safe Affordable Transportation Alternatives Act \(2008\)](#)**
In January 2008, the General Assembly enacted this legislation requiring the Dept. of Administration (in collaboration with RIPTA, Statewide Planning, DEM, DOT, labor leaders and others), to develop and implement plans to reduce single occupant vehicle commute trips. The plan should include a trip reduction program aimed at major employers (50+ employees) and state agencies, with an established goal of reducing vehicle travel by 15% by 2012, and 35% by 2016. This legislation also establishes the State Employee Commuter Task Force, of which RIPTA is an active member. RIPTA is working to integrate and expand EcoPass participation and other Commuter Resources Programs to support the program goals.

- **Statewide System of School Transportation (2006)**

In 2006, the General Assembly tasked the RI Dept of Education, RIPTA and the Office of Statewide Planning with creating an implementation plan for a statewide student busing system, initially for special education and out-of-district students and eventually for all students.

This plan was completed in 2008 and First Student was chosen as the statewide bus vendor. The Governor's FY 2009 supplemental budget included a mandate for statewide transportation, which was accepted by both the House and Senate. Full roll-out of the plan will be complete in September 2011.

- **Oversight of the Statewide School Transportation System (2009)**

In June 2009, the General Assembly gave responsibility for oversight of the statewide school transportation system to the RI Dept. of Education, in collaboration with the Office of Statewide Planning and RIPTA. The management function has been outsourced to TransPar Group. RIPTA is anticipated to continue to participate as a member of the Advisory Committee.

2. RIPTA Financing / Statewide Transportation Funding

- **RIPTA's Annual Financial Statement and Schedules (FY2009)**

Each year, RIPTA submits an audited financial statement to the Rhode Island Secretary of State, with Independent Auditor's Report.

- **RIPTA Capital Budget (FY2011-FY2015)**

Each July, RIPTA must submit a rolling five year Capital Plan to the State Budget Office. RIPTA's most recent capital budget submission (for FY2011 –FY2015) represents \$218 M of investment in the state's transit system, largely financed through federal dollars. Federal funding programs typically require a 20 local match, and this contribution is generally provided through the issuance of voter-approved General Obligation Bonds. A transportation bond referendum is placed on the statewide ballot every two years, with the next scheduled to appear in November 2010. Bond referenda for 2012 and 2014 are anticipated to be around \$4 M each. Debt service on these bonds is paid by revenues in RIPTA's annual operating budget.

For certain projects (e.g. RIPTA's new Paratransit Maintenance Facility being constructed on Elmwood Avenue), additional local match funds may be provided through appropriations of the RI Capital Plan Fund (RICAP), a "rainy day fund" of excess general revenues that the Legislature may use to fund capital project expenditures or debt service. ARRA funds authorized through the special federal stimulus efforts of 2009 provide 100% federal funding with no requirement for local contribution for qualified projects.

- **Governor's Blue Ribbon Panel on Transportation Funding (2008)**

In recognition of the serious reduction in transportation funding and an aging transportation infrastructure in critical need of repair or replacement, Governor Carcieri established a Blue Ribbon Panel in March of 2008 to assess Rhode Island's transportation needs and to identify options for potential funding sources. The mission of the panel was:

- To fully understand the needs of transportation financing in Rhode Island;
- To analyze and assess funding options, and
- To recommend funding mechanisms and inform the public of the plan.

A RIPTA Presentation to the Blue Ribbon Panel was made in mid-2008 to provide the Committee with background and inputs on RIPTA's operating revenues, operating expenses and Six-Year Capital Plan.

The Panel's final report was issued in December 2008 and proposed two alternative funding scenarios: one providing the level of investment needed to bring Rhode Island's roads and

bridges into a state of good repair roads and to allow RIPTA to maintain transit services at their current level; and, one providing an increased level of investment to sustain a more robust multi-modal public transit system. Each strategy included a mix of proposed revenue sources. The General Assembly did implement a two-cent increase in the motor fuel tax effective July 1, 2008, designating the proceeds to RIPTA, and effectively allowing RIPTA to maintain existing services for the short-term. No other recommendations of the report have been implemented.

- **Governor's Review of RIPTA (2008)**

Following a 2007 Management Performance Audit of RIPTA (performed by Abrams-Cherwony & Associates for the State Budget Office), Governor Carcieri requested that a panel of state officials comprised of the Director of Administration (Jerome Williams), Director of Revenue (Garry Sasse) and Director of Transportation (Michael Lewis) conduct a further review of the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority and to develop a short and long term strategic plan for addressing persistent budget challenges. The panel recognized that RIPTA "performs overall at a level consistent with other transit peers", however, the focus of this review was to propose revenue enhancements and expenditure reductions. Recommendations includes items such as elimination of free senior/disabled fare during off-peak hours (would require an act of the General Assembly), elimination of the Newport/Providence ferry service, elimination of advertising, reduction of overtime, discontinuation of some Ride pass products and reviewing insurance coverage (again requiring General Assembly action).

- **Recommendations for Funding Public Transit in Rhode Island (2008)**
New Public Transit Alliance (NuPTA) (2008)

This report followed a forum convened by NuPTA on September 23, 2008. 70 businesses, civic and political leaders convened to discuss a pending financial crisis at RIPTA that threatened to decimate public transit service in Rhode Island. The forum included the Governor, Lt. Governor, State legislators, the Directors of the Departments of Administration and Transportation, RIPTA Board and staff, major employers, developers, interest groups and members of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Panel for Transportation Funding. The consensus of the group was that the proposed public transit service cuts would be counterproductive to the state's economic and environmental interests. Presentations made by Governor Carcieri, the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority, Grow Smart Rhode Island and the Sierra Club underscored the need for a long-term, sustainable funding mechanism to ensure that RIPTA is able to meet the growing demand for public transit among Rhode Island's commuters and businesses. The recommendations contained in the report were derived in part from the forum and were intended to guide and support actions by the Governor and the General Assembly in reforming the method of funding public transit in Rhode Island. NuPTA deliberately presented a broad menu of options, recognizing that there is no single solution to sustainable transit funding and that not all of the options can or need to be implemented simultaneously.

- **Special Legislative Commission to Study Transit in Rhode Island (2007)**

On May 25, 2004 the Rhode Island General Assembly authorized, by Resolution, the creation of a Special Legislative Commission to Study Transit Services in the State of Rhode Island. This Resolution was a response to the perennial financial problems faced by the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) and the Commission was charged with identifying ways to optimize the functionality of a legacy transit system. When the Commission was established in March 2006, however, numerous current events had combined to dramatically alter the Commission's perspective on transit. These events included: rising energy costs, traffic congestion, shifts in demographic trends, urban design renewal and the extension of commuter rail service. All members concluded that restructuring, reinvestment and creative financing would enable RIPTA to become Rhode Island's "Mobility Manager". Transforming RIPTA into the State's Mobility Manager calls for the Authority to serve as a major resource in the solution of Rhode Island's transportation problems rather than as a limited service provider. The Commission released its report on May 29, 2007 with recommendations were intended to guide RIPTA's transformation from an agency perpetually struggling to balance a budget into a public transit system able to respond to rising energy costs, make transit an integral part of community design statewide and

provide mobility options that meet the different needs of a diverse population. Among the recommendations were:

- Require RIPTA, RIDOT and Statewide Planning to develop a public transit strategy for Rhode Island that maximizes financial investments and connects all forms of transit such as pedestrian, bike, rail, ferry, bus, etc.
 - Reduce the reliance on the state gasoline tax as a primary source of state funding to support operating expenses of public transit providers.
 - Plan public transit services and connections as the defining element of new construction and redevelopment rather than as an auxiliary part of communities.
- **RIPEC Study: Transportation at a Crossroads (2002)**
The Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council undertook this early analysis of transportation funding in Rhode Island to highlight the lack of an integrated system for transportation policy decision-making and the unsustainable method of funding road and bridge infrastructure as well as transit capital and operations. Some selected quotes follow:
 - "State policy-makers need to reinvent the way Rhode Island's transportation infrastructure will be financed in the future".
 - "Current state transit funding is inelastic and insufficient to sustain the existing statewide transit system even in a no-growth mode".
 - "To further diversify RIPTA's revenue base, it is also suggested that a portion of the revenue collected from motor vehicle registration and driver license fees be earmarked for mass transit".

3. Outside Audits & Peer Reviews

- **RIPTA Management Audit prepared by the RI State Budget Office (2007)**
Commissioned by the Rhode Island State Budget Office, the national transportation management consulting firm of Abrams and Cherwony conducted a Management Performance Audit (MPA) of RIPTA. The purpose of the audit was to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the overall performance of the transit system and to identify actions that could be undertaken to achieve improvements. The audit consisted of three major areas of review. (Peer group analysis comparing RIPTA to similar sized transit systems throughout the United States, a detailed audit of each of the 13 functional areas of RIPTA, and a feasibility study to determine whether RIPTA could be transferred into the State Department of Transportation. The executive summary noted the following:
 - RIPTA performs better than its peer group in all five measures related to maintenance performance.
 - Better than peer averages on 15 out of 27 measures of performance indicators.
 - Its trends were generally favorable and comparable to the peer average in the cost per passenger measure and outperforming or coming very close to the peer average in per capita measures.

Areas for improvement included insurance costs, operations/employee ratios and administrative costs, all of which are being addressed by management and the RIPTA Board.

- **Information Technology System Needs Assessment and Implementation Plan (2002)**
This report (prepared by Draycott Consulting, et. al) undertook a comprehensive view of RIPTA's future technology needs based on existing business, planned future developments and initiatives, and the current state of technology available to the public transit industry. It evaluated RIPTA's current technology and the ability of this technology to meet future needs, and identified the most effective strategy for migrating current technology to the future.

- **[RI Office of the Auditor General – Performance Audit \(1999\)](#)**

The Auditor General conducted a performance audit of RIPTA, covering fiscal years 1998 and 1999. The audit focused on operational, administrative and financial practices and identified potential improvements. Many recommendations have been implemented, including: 1) upgraded dispatch, scheduling and centralized maintenance for Paratransit; 2) improved procurement practices; and, 3) upgraded bus dispatch, vehicle communication and information systems technology.

The report also focused on the need to maximize passenger revenue and other revenue sources to avoid dependence on increasing amounts of state subsidy and to provide the revenues necessary to maintain quality service and implement planned initiatives. This was largely in response to the FY1999 decision by the federal government to stop subsidizing operating expenses. It was suggested that RIPTA develop a plan to increase the percentage of operating costs derived from passenger fares by 2% each year until it reaches 35%. (Note: FY2008 passenger revenues covered about 28.5% of operating costs).

- **[RIPTA Systemwide Analysis \(1992\)](#)**

This comprehensive review of functional areas of RIPTA's system was conducted by Abrahms-Cherwony & Associates and included operations, planning, finance and management. Recommendations included a Service and Route Plan, with proposed service standards and a detailed set of route and service modifications to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of RIPTA fixed route service. A link to the executive summary of this plan is provided above. A separate management review was also performed with subsequent recommendations on Fare Structure, Revenue Handling, Budgeting, Planning, Vehicle Maintenance and Risk Assessment.

4. Statewide Planning Documents

- **[Land Use 2025: RI State Land Use Policies and Plan \(2006\)](#)**

This document prepared by the RI Division of Planning sets forth statewide goals and objectives to guide land use planning and development actions at both the state and municipal levels. Specific goals are intended to help direct future growth and to limit sprawl in rural areas. It is recognized that implementation will involve additional investment in public infrastructure within the urban boundary to reinforce the distinction between urban and rural areas. Several specific strategies are identified to promote the development of intermodal transit hubs and greater use of public transit, and specific objectives designed to advance these strategies include:

- Upgrade and maintain existing multimodal terminals in the State.
- Plan and develop new multi-modal stations to serve future demand.
- Plan for land use (transit oriented development) surrounding terminals to support the mass transportation use. Revise plans and regulations accordingly.
- Support an effective, efficient intermodal transportation system connecting centers by providing transit supportive features including extensive, connecting sidewalk and pathway networks, commuter parking, bus, taxi, and bicycle facilities.

- **[Transportation 2030: Long Range Transportation Plan \(2008\)](#)**

Federal transportation law requires each state to address long term transportation needs through the development of a long range transportation plan. The Rhode Island Division of Planning updates the plan every four years, soliciting public input and evaluating fiscal constraints and air quality impacts. *Transportation 2030* recognizes that "RIPTA is a public investment that is crucial to the economy, contributes to the fabric and strength of urban areas, provides a means of transportation for people who cannot or choose not to drive (whether commuters, shoppers, low-income, elderly, students, disabled, or others), improves the environment, and conserves energy". As a comprehensive policy objective, *Transportation 2030* recommends that the overall

level of RIPTA service be improved. Goals and objectives related to transit and intermodal transportation include:

Goal: Provide a safe, robust, and convenient network of transit and shared ride services with seamless intermodal connections in support of increased employment opportunities, improved environmental quality, and reduced congestion and auto dependency.

- Increase transit ridership
- Increase carpooling and vanpooling.
- Maintain transit vehicles, equipment, and facilities.

Goal: Provide convenient intermodal facilities and services offering seamless connections for passengers and freight Increase use of Park and Ride lots.

- Increase number of bicycles on buses.
- Maintain ferry service and accommodations for bicycles.
- Expand use of freight rail.
- Facilitate movement between modes.

- **[Transportation Improvement Program \(TIP\) FY2009 – FY2012](#)**

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is simply a list of transportation projects that Rhode Island intends to implement using federal highway and transit funds. Federal regulations require that states and metropolitan areas undertake an extensive public planning process resulting in an eligible project list, the TIP, as a prerequisite for receipt of federal highway and transit funds. The TIP is consistent with Transportation 2030, Rhode Island's long range transportation planning document. The FY09-FY12 TIP programs over \$280 million in federal funds for RIPTA over a four-year period.

- **Local Comprehensive Plans**

Under the Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act, Chapter 45-22.2 of the General Laws, each municipality is required to have a local comprehensive plan. The Statewide Planning Program is responsible for coordinating the review and approval of local comprehensive plans and periodic updates. Most of these plans contain a specific transportation element. Links to a sample of plans from around the state are listed below. Plans from other municipalities may be found on individual city and town websites.

[Providence Tomorrow: Interim Comprehensive Plan \(2007\)](#)

[City of Warwick Comprehensive Plan Update \(2005\)](#)

[City of Cranston Comprehensive Plan \(2005\)](#)

[City of Pawtucket Comprehensive Plan \(2003\)](#)

[City of East Providence Comprehensive Plan Update – Draft \(2009\)](#)

[City of Newport Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update \(2003\)](#)

[Town of Westerly Comprehensive Plan \(1991\)](#)

[Town of South Kingstown Comprehensive Community Plan Five-Year Update \(2005\)](#)

5. Ride Program/Human Services Transportation

- **RIPTA / EOHHS Human Services Transportation Study (planned 2010)**

In recognition of the fact that transportation is essential to the delivery of human service programs, RIPTA will assist the State of Rhode Island in undertaking an in-depth assessment of its human service transportation programs. The study will inventory existing financial resources, program requirements, costs, and current transportation strategies in place today. Better strategies for coordinating financial and transportation resources will be identified, with an overall goal of allowing the State to appropriately and satisfactorily serve the largest number of people it can with the funding available. The study is funded using federal dollars and is anticipated to begin in January 2010.

- **A Coordinated Plan for Public Transit – Human Services Transportation (2007)**

Current federal transportation authorization, SAFETEA-LU, requires the development of a locally coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan. As defined, these plans are to identify the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes, provide strategies for meeting those local needs, and prioritize transportation services for funding and implementation. The statewide plan was developed by RIPTA in cooperation with the Departments of Labor, Human Services and Elderly Affairs, and the Governor's Commission on Disabilities and other human service agencies. It includes an inventory of existing human service transportation, an assessment of outstanding needs, and the identification of potential strategies and priorities to meet these needs.

- **RIPTA's Guide to Mobility Management (2004)**

RIPTA staff developed this resource guide to serve as a reference and training tool for human services staff and job developers when assisting transportation disadvantaged persons with their individual transportation needs. The guide includes a summary of transportation options, educational and training resources and a list of financial resources that may support individual needs. The guide also provides detailed instruction on individual trip planning in Rhode Island.

- **RIPTA Paratransit & Fixed Route Coordination Study (1998)**

This study evaluated the potential for better coordinating RIPTA Fixed Route and Paratransit services, and included an extensive public involvement and market research component. The report concluded that certain areas of the state do not warrant the same levels of transit service and would be better served by demand response/Flex service. The study also identified several broader issues, including: 1) the need to find additional revenue sources (besides the gas tax) to fund transit; 2) the need to adopt service standards to continually evaluate, monitor and improve the effectiveness of existing services; 3) RIPTA is the logical candidate to manage other transportation modes (water, rail) but would require additional staffing to do so; and, 4) a need to establish a program to reinvest and maintain capital assets.

- **Senate Commission to Study the Transportation Needs of Senior Citizens, Persons with Disabilities, and Residents without Autos in Areas Not Served by RIPTA (1999)**

The Commission's purpose was to study the transportation needs of senior citizens, persons with disabilities and residents who are not able to use private automobiles in areas not serviced by RIPTA, and to make recommendations to ensure transportation needs are met. The Commission, chaired by Maureen Maigret, undertook a comprehensive review of the Paratransit system. Recommendations included: 1) integration of MHRH into the state coordinated system; 2) continued operation of private and municipal services that complement Ride, while looking at future integration potential; and 3) the need to identify funds to support continued Ride operations (the use of DEA gas tax receipts was suggested as a partial means of addressing this need).

- **Paratransit Study Group Report (1998)**
The Paratransit Study Group was formed in 1998 in response to RI House and Senate concerns regarding the operation and funding of the statewide Paratransit program (RIde). It was chaired by Bob Griffin of DOA/Strategic Planning. Issues discussed in the report include: administrative and vehicle replacement costs. The report recommended one single agency be responsible for coordination, management and long term planning for the statewide Paratransit system. This led to RIPTA's eventual role as the statewide coordinator for the RIde program.

6. Commuter Resource RI / Transit Incentives

- **Commuter Resource RI Annual Report (FY2008)**
Through the Commuter Resource Rhode Island (CRRI) program, RIPTA provides free trip-planning services and other transit incentives. The program is co-sponsored by the RI Department of Transportation. At the end of each fiscal year, an Annual Report on CRRI activities is prepared, providing an update on all program areas (, Carpooling, Bicycling, Transit, Outreach and Corporate Partners), as well as a preview of activities for the upcoming fiscal year.
- **IRS Commuter Tax Benefits**
The Internal Revenue Code allows an employer to provide benefits to his/her employees for the employee's *personal* transportation, such as commuting to and from work (*IRC §132(f)(1) Reg. 1.132-9(b)*). Employers may provide up to \$115 a month to their employees as a tax-free benefit to commute by transit or vanpool. Bicycling commuting expenses are also eligible. RIPTA's Commuter Resources RI program promotes this benefit through the Wageworks and Commuter Checks programs.

7. Other RIPTA Reports & Planning Documents

- **RIPTA Service Standards Policy – Fixed Route (1992)**
To prevent discriminatory service design or operation, the Federal Transit Administration requires transit agencies to adopt systemwide service standards and systemwide service policies. Systemwide service standards are required for vehicle load, vehicle headway, on-time performance, distribution of transit amenities, and service availability. This Service Standards Policy was prepared by Abrams-Cherwony & Associates in November 1992, and adopted by RIPTA's Board of Directors in 1995.
- **Fixed Route Service Standards – DRAFT UPDATE (1995)**
This document presents draft Standards for Service Evaluation of existing and future Bus Operations. It represents an update of the 1992 Service Standards developed by Abrams-Cherwony & Associates in 1992 (and described below). This version of the Service Standards was never formally adopted by RIPTA.
- **Flex Service Standards and Service Types - DRAFT (1992)**
These draft Flex Service standards were modeled on RIPTA's existing fixed route service standards (see above). However, these standards also reflect the unique qualities of Flex Service and reflect five major aspects of service: availability, service level, patron convenience, fiscal condition, and passenger comfort. An additional consideration for the application of Flex Service is system coverage.
- **RIPTA Annual Report (FY2008)**

By September 30th each year, RIPTA is required to submit an Annual Report on the previous fiscal year to the Rhode Island Secretary of State. This report must include a list of significant accomplishments, a description of ongoing programs and activities, a financial statement, a report on employees and employee training, and a review of legal matters. Recommendations for improvement over the upcoming fiscal year are also to be provided.

- **[RIPTA Report on Water Ferry Service \(FY2007\)](#)**

This report provides a background and history of RIPTA's Water Transportation Service and reports on service statistics from 2007, when the service was financed through the use of FHWA CMAQ funds.

8. Transit Enhancement & Expansion Studies/Projects

- **[Metropolitan Providence Transit Enhancement Study \(2009\)](#)**

In the fall of 2008, RIPTA initiated the Metro Transit Study, with support from the City of Providence, to meet the growing demand for transit in and around Providence. The study culminated in December 2009 with a series of recommendations for 1) Meeting Current Transit Needs and 2) Growing Our Transit System. The recommendations include transit improvements that may be implemented in the immediate short term, as well as several long-term alternatives for further consideration and more detailed evaluation in subsequent study phases. The total estimated capital cost to implement all the Metro Transit recommendations would be \$126.7 M (\$2009).

- **[Providence Streetcar: Proposed Starter Segment Concept \(2009\)](#)**

The Metro Transit Study (RIPTA, 2009) included a feasibility analysis for potential new modes and concluded that the concentration of activities within downtown Providence would support the development of a streetcar system. A streetcar concept has been proposed to serve as a circulator within a roughly two-mile corridor, connecting the Hospital District, College Hill and downtown Providence. RIPTA and the City of Providence now plan to advance this project into the next phase, and plan to complete an FTA Alternatives Analysis. The Office of Statewide Planning has awarded a \$100,000 Planning Challenge Grant to support this effort.

- **[RIPTA Statewide Park and Ride Assessment & Expansion Plan \(2009\)](#)**

RIPTA currently stops at 28 Park and Ride lots throughout the state, serving 700 passengers daily from these locations. All 28 lots are owned by the RIDOT or other parties. In 2009, RIPTA performed a statewide assessment of the Park and Ride program, specifically responding to a recommendation made in the 2008 Governor's Audit to implement a differentiated express service from these lots. The assessment found that revenue from increased Park and Ride service would not cover increased costs, and instead recommended a program to increase Park and Ride ridership through better signage, improved maintenance and co-location of uses. The assessment also recommended that new lots be built to expand capacity in or near overcrowded locations.

- **[Warwick Intermodal Station/Kent County Feeder Service Proposal \(2009\)](#)**

The Intermodal Rail Station at TF Green Airport in Warwick will open in September 2010, providing rail service to Providence and Boston. Currently, RIPTA operates one route along Jefferson Boulevard, as well as two routes to the airport terminal off of Post Road. RIPTA proposes to enhance local service and add new routes in the Warwick and Kent County areas to serve new destinations and to provide better connections to both the airport and new rail station. Proposed changes include:

- New connections between the airport and key destinations such as CCRI, the Warwick Mall, and the Centre of New England and Amgen headquarters in Coventry.
- Reconfiguring existing service to connect local Warwick, East Greenwich and Scituate neighborhoods to the station, and to enhance transfer points with other local bus routes.

The proposed plan involves more than 50,000 additional service hours per year and would require an additional 16 vehicles to implement these enhancements.

- **[Aquidneck Island Transportation Study \(2009-2011\)](#)**

This study is underway by the Aquidneck Island Planning Commission (AIPC) working in close partnership with its member communities of Newport, Middletown and Portsmouth and with other local, state and federal agencies. The 24-month study will result in the development of a Comprehensive Multi-Modal Transportation Master Plan for Aquidneck Island. The Master Plan will guide the investment of future funding into the Island's overall transportation system through a program of recommended short, medium, and long-term capital improvements suitable for inclusion into the TIP. This project is seen as being critically important to the future economic viability and quality of life on Aquidneck Island. It will reach across all modes of transportation (bus, rail, bike, pedestrian, auto, etc.) and seek to make modal connections and improvements consistent with sound land use planning - all in an effort to increase overall mobility, modal choice, and safety for our residents, businesses, employees, and visitors while decreasing traffic congestion and its negative impacts on our environment, economy and quality of life. RIPTA is a member of the Advisory Committee for the study.

- **[Growing Smart with Transit: A Report of the Transit 2020 Group \(2007\)](#)**

In April 2006, Providence Mayor Cicilline created the 27-member Transit 2020 Working Group comprised of business and community leaders, government officials, Smart Growth advocates, transit users and environmentalists to develop strategies for enhancing and expanding the region's public transit system. The group's work culminated in a report that was released in March 2007. The Transit 2020 report stresses the need for a broad commitment to the policy changes and investments that are necessary to development and sustain a robust transportation system. The report, released in February 2007, sets forth a series of recommendations including the following:

- Rhode Island is fortunate to have an excellent base on which to build its transit future, RIPTA, which needs to receive advocacy and support from the public and private sector
- Transit use must be proactively encouraged through incentives, and automobile use must be discouraged in the public and private sector
- New and expanded transit options must be developed to serve current users and those who choose not to use transit
- A robust transit system must be seamlessly intermodal and regional
- Land use policies must encourage the expansion of transit and increase the use of transit in everyday life

9. Commuter Rail Studies / Documents

- **[Rhode Island Rail Corridor Feasibility Study \(1994\)](#)**

RIDOT's examination of nine rail line corridors for potential reuse for transit services (i.e. commuter rail, light rail or express busways). The study concluded that further project

development along the Northeast Corridor presented the best opportunity to develop an intrastate rail service, with stations at T.F. Green Airport, Wickford and other locations.

- **Warwick Intermodal Station Environmental Assessment (1999)**

TEA-21 authorized \$25 M in FHWA funds for a train station and people mover connection at T.F. Green Airport in Warwick. RIDOT undertook a detailed Environmental Assessment prior to initiating engineering, with final FHWA approval (FONSI) in 2001.

- **South County Commuter Rail Service Operations Plan (2001)**

This study examined several operating scenarios for commuter rail service between Providence and Westerly. The analysis included an estimate of costs and ridership, a financial/economic assessment, and a review of schedule, fares and service providers. The plan recommended RIDOT proceed with South County Commuter Rail service in an incremental/phased approach with the first phase being extension of MBTA service to T.F. Green and Wickford. This alternative takes advantage of existing investment in the Northeast Corridor by Amtrak, the Pawtucket Layover Yard and the Warwick Intermodal Station, and will capture 70% of the total SCCR projected ridership while covering only half of the distance between Providence and Westerly.

- **Aquidneck Island Passenger Rail/Bike Path Study (2002)**

RIDOT undertook a detailed feasibility study of a commuter rail or light rail on the underutilized RIDOT-owned Newport Secondary Track between Newport and Fall River, MA. The study also examined the potential for a rail-with-trail (bike path). Two rail alternatives were examined including MBTA commuter rail (via Fall River and a new Sakonnet River rail bridge) and an on-island rail shuttle. The bike path component looked quite promising, but would require environmental review due to the rail line's location. More detailed analysis would be required for any publicly-supported option.

Newport's Dinner Train long range plan includes an on-island rail shuttle and FHWA CMAQ funds have been appropriated for this in the TIP.

- **South County Commuter Rail Environmental Assessment (2003)**

This FTA funded EA was completed in 2003 for the Wickford Junction Station and the 20-mile service extension recommended in the 2001 SCCR Operations Plan. The station includes a 1000 car parking garage, platform and a side track for trains to pull off the main line. The station is to be incorporated into the adjacent Wickford Junction commercial/residential development to create a transit-oriented development. The EA received a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) from FTA in 2003. A subsequent reevaluation was approved by FTA in 2006.

- **Pawtucket/Central Falls Commuter Rail Feasibility Study & Site Analysis (2007)**

The City of Pawtucket, under a project agreement with RIDOT, hired a consultant to undertake a feasibility study on two potential sites for a new commuter rail station. Funding was provided by a combination of FTA, FHWA and state funds. The study identified a preferred site at the historic depot on Broad Street and concluded it was possible to restore commuter rail service back to this area. The study did not specifically address anticipated issues with Amtrak (need for sidings to pull trains off the main line) and the MBTA (stop would add time to their Boston trips), although the consultant felt these issues could be worked out.

Since the completion of the study, \$1.9 M in FTA New Starts funding has been appropriated for the next phase of this project to undertake preliminary engineering and NEPA environmental review. The City of Pawtucket has recently proposed a third site along Barton Street for the train station, and have committed to providing the 20% match for the federal funds. RIDOT is working with the City to finalize a request to FTA for entry into PE/NEPA.

- **Woonsocket Commuter Rail Feasibility Study (2008)**

With a Statewide Planning Challenge Grant, the City of Woonsocket undertook a feasibility study on reinstating commuter rail between Woonsocket and Boston, utilizing an extension of the present-day MBTA Franklin line service. Due to extensive environmental issues with several abandoned rail lines, the City quickly concluded that this was not an alternative worth pursuing. The City directed the consultant to examine a potential Woonsocket to Providence service along the P&W owned Main Line, with a Boston connection at the proposed Pawtucket/Central Falls station. The study concluded that sufficient ridership exists to warrant further analysis of this corridor, and recommended that the next study extend the service area to the new train station at T.F. Green Airport.

- **Intrastate Commuter Rail Feasibility Study (2009)**

With a Statewide Planning Challenge Grant, the Providence Foundation and the City of Woonsocket teamed up to undertake a feasibility study for commuter rail from Woonsocket to Providence to T.F. Green Airport in Warwick. The study concluded that intrastate commuter rail would serve two-thirds of RI's population and most major employment centers by operating on two active rail lines: Amtrak's Northeast Corridor and P&W's Main Line. The study recommended station stops in Woonsocket, Cumberland, Pawtucket, Providence, Cranston and Warwick. The study recommended that the next phase of the project be included in the TIP and that discussion with P&W Railroad begin soon.

- **South County Commuter Rail Extension Phase II Operations & Site Assessment Study (2009)**

With the Phase I SCCR service well on its way to construction and operations in 2011, RIDOT Intermodal Planning has initiated a Phase II analysis of its extension further south to Kingston and Westerly. In addition, at the request of the communities, station stops in Cranston and East Greenwich have been added.

RIDOT staff has begun the detailed analysis on potential sites, potential operators and have met with local planners. A consultant will soon be hired to assist with the more technical tasks.

- **Pilgrim Partnership & South County Commuter Rail Operations Agreement (1988-2009)**

The Pilgrim Partnership is the agreement between MassDOT, the MBTA and Rhode Island regarding the operation of MBTA commuter rail service in Rhode Island. The first agreement was initiated January 1988 as the MBTA began to run service to Providence, and has been amended subsequent times to reflect increases in Providence service and upgrades to related infrastructure. The agreement involves payment by the state of Rhode Island (using federal funds) to Massachusetts in exchange for the provision of commuter rail service in Rhode Island and related capital projects. Massachusetts provides the local match. Providence MBTA commuter rail trains currently serve over 1,000 riders per day (on 14¹/₂ round trips and 8 weekend round trips).

The South County Commuter Rail agreement signed in September, 2009 established terms for MBTA operation to Warwick and Wickford.