



COALITION FOR TRANSPORTATION CHOICES

2011 Legislative and Policy Agenda

Updated 3/10/11

AARP

Amalgamated Transit Union

American Lung Association in RI

Apeiron Institute for Sustainable Living

Aquidneck Island Planning Commission

Audubon Society of RI

Blackstone Valley Partnership

Blackstone Valley Tourism Council

Blueways Alliance

Brown emPower

Childhood Lead Action Project

City-State, the Urban Design Lab
at RISD

Clean Water Action

Conservation Law Foundation

Cornish Associates

DOT Watch

East Coast Greenway Alliance

Ecolect

Environmental Justice League of
Rhode Island

Farm Fresh RI

Goodwill Industries of RI

Grow Smart Rhode Island

Head of the Bay Gateway

LISC-RI

Narragansett Bay Estuary Program

Opportunities Unlimited, Inc.

Pawtucket Foundation

Providence Foundation

Providence Warwick Convention &
Visitors Bureau

Recycle-a-Bike

RI Association of Railroad Passengers

RI Bicycle Coalition

RICOSH

RI Consulting Engineers

RI Interfaith Power & Light

RI Land Trust Council

RI Student Climate Coalition

Save The Bay

SEIU, District 1199

Sierra Club

The Providential Gardener

U.S. Open Cycling

Working RI

Youth In Action

235 Promenade Street #550

Providence, RI 02908

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State

Legislative

Support the Rhode Island Transportation Investment and Debt Reduction Act of 2011 ([S148](#), [H5789](#)) to create sustainable investments in road and bridge rehabilitation, maintenance, public transit and to simultaneously reduce the amount of borrowing through bonds. This bill will reduce future debt-service obligations while increasing the investment in Rhode Island's transportation infrastructure.

This bill will:

- **Create the Rhode Island Highway Maintenance and Public Transit Trust Fund.** The Trust Fund would be overseen by the State Planning Council within the Department of Administration's Division of Planning. Trust fund money would be allocated as follows:
 - 50% to RIDOT for maintenance and repair of existing roads and bridges
 - 35% to RIPTA for capital expenditures or operations maintenance
 - 15% to cities and towns for maintenance and repair of local roads
- **Invest in the Trust Fund through an increase in the auto registration fee of \$20 per year.** This source of funding would generate an estimated \$23 million annually. This and seven other recommendations were included in the 2008 Governor's Blue Ribbon Panel (BRP) report on Rhode Island's Transportation Future. Other funding sources could be added to the Trust Fund in order to address the shortfall in transportation funding needs. The BRP reported the funding gap that exists to bring all roads and bridges into a state of good repair is \$285 million annually for 10 years.
- **Reduce future debt by capping the amount of borrowing through bonds.** For every \$10 million directed to the Department of Transportation from the Trust Fund, the amount of RIDOT's next biennial bond issue would be reduced by \$5 million from the base amount. For decades, Rhode Island has issued bonds in order to provide the 20% match required to bring federal transportation dollars into Rhode Island. The bonds have created a substantial debt burden that will have to be serviced for generations. In 2011, over 50% of the money allocated to RIDOT from the gasoline tax will pay for debt service on past bond issues.

State Policy

- In order to ensure proper legislative oversight for all modes of transportation in an integrated fashion, we recommend that the General Assembly establish a Standing Committee on Transportation, perhaps by expanding the scope of the existing Joint Committee on Highway Safety.
- Advance implementation of the State Employee Commuter Reduction Act which passed the 2008 General Assembly ([S2881](#) / [H7377](#)). The Act set up a Task Force to develop, publicize and implement a plan to provide incentives for state employees to reduce vehicle miles travelled (VMTs), including the option to opt out of free parking in lieu of a public transit pass.
- Advance implementation of infrastructure projects that were awarded 100% federally funded grants in 2007 and 2010 through the RI Safe Routes to School program.

Local

- Encourage “walkable, bikeable” communities. Promote adoption of municipal resolutions that encourage incorporation of *Complete Streets* principles into local Comprehensive Community Plans.
- Promote the Institute for Transportation Engineer’s (ITE) Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) Manual as recommended design practice for local road construction or reconstruction.
- Engage local planners, DPW officials, and town engineers.

Federal

Legislative

- **Reauthorization of the Federal Transportation Spending Bill**
Advocate for swift reauthorization of the federal transportation spending bill and for inclusion of CTC principles. SAFETEA-LU expired September 30, 2009 and has been extended by Continuing Resolution six times.
- **National Transportation Objectives Act**
Establishes national transportation objectives and performance targets for the purpose of assessing progress toward meeting national transportation objectives.
- **Complete Streets Act**
Ensures that all users of the transportation system, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, children, older individuals, and individuals with disabilities, are able to travel safely and conveniently on and across federally funded streets and highways.