

Public Relations Case Study:

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation's closure of the Washington Bridge

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## **Abstract**

On December 11, 2023, the westbound side of the Washington Bridge in Providence, RI, was abruptly closed due to the discovery of a critical structural failure involving broken steel tie-down rods. This immediate closure of a bridge carrying approximately 90,000 vehicles daily resulted in significant traffic disruption, described as a "commuter crisis," increased crash calls, and negative impacts on local businesses and streets. The situation necessitated a coordinated response from the McKee administration and RIDOT, including engineering evaluations that led to the decision on March 14, 2024, that the westbound bridge must be entirely demolished and rebuilt, a project expected to continue into 2026 with an estimated cost of up to \$300 million. The state launched a multi-channel communication campaign utilizing a dedicated website, press releases, public meetings, and social media to inform the public about the changes, traffic management measures (such as bypass lanes and travel time tools), and project timelines. Efforts were made to address public safety, manage detours, and communicate ongoing investigations and oversight. However, the response began with initial miscommunication and a perceived lack of transparency, leading to public and legislative frustration and prompting demands for more accountability and regular updates. Despite state efforts to improve communication and involve third-party experts and federal authorities to build confidence, regaining public trust has been challenging due to evolving timelines, initial inaccuracies, and legal constraints on shared information, with media coverage often reflecting a critical tone.

**Key Words:** Washington Bridge, Bridge Closure, Structural Failure, RIDOT (Rhode Island Department of Transportation, Public Relations, Communication, Traffic Management, Demolition and Rebuild/Replacement, Crisis Communication, Transparency, Public Trust,

Community Relations/Engagement, Federal Investigation, Oversight, Economic Impact, Infrastructure.

The communications effort made by the Rhode Island Department of Transportation and the Rhode Island Government was a community relations PR campaign using the public information model to keep the public up-to-date and informed on the Washington Bridge closure. This campaign focused on engaging the community, media coverage, and disseminating information through multiple channels. Analyzed through the RPIE strategic planning model lens, this case will assess the effectiveness of their community relations campaign effort throughout the event.

The response to the closure began with miscommunication and a lack of transparency, leading to public and legislative frustration. Efforts were later made to improve communication, but skepticism remained, prompting further investigation. The Washington Bridge closure has had lasting effects on traffic, businesses, and the community, with ongoing efforts to address the situation.

### **Situation Analysis**

On December 11, 2023, the westbound side of the Washington Bridge in Providence, RI, was closed immediately due to a critical failure of some original bridge components. This decision was made following the discovery of deteriorating structural components, specifically broken steel tie-down rods, by a consultant for the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) during an inspection on December 8th. The consultant's report indicated a "critical failure", and RIDOT described the issue as potentially leading to a catastrophe. The bridge, which carries Interstate 195 over the Seekonk River from Providence to East Providence and serves as a key gateway, supports approximately 90,000 vehicles daily.

Following the abrupt closure, engineers conducted a detailed structural evaluation of the Washington Bridge. On March 14, 2024, Governor Dan McKee announced that the westbound Washington Bridge would need to be entirely demolished and rebuilt rather than undergo repairs. State officials disclosed that this reconstruction project was expected to continue into 2026, with an estimated cost of up to \$300 million.

The closure immediately disrupted traffic flow on Interstate 195, causing significant delays and creating what many described as a commuter crisis. The Providence Marathon and Half Marathon, scheduled for May 5th, were canceled due to "unforeseen challenges, including the Washington Bridge closure". Local business owners reacted with worry to the announcement of the demolition and rebuild, anticipating a prolonged period of reduced traffic and potential negative impacts on their bottom lines. The detours also led to increased traffic and reports of damage to local streets in both Providence and East Providence, along with a doubling in crash calls on I-195. Initially, students in East Providence even had to switch to remote learning.

The situation necessitated a coordinated response from various levels. The McKee administration initiated a two-part investigation into why the bridge's condition deteriorated so suddenly, including a "forensic analysis". RIDOT worked to establish bypass lanes on the eastbound side of the bridge and implement other traffic pattern adjustments to ease congestion. The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) opened a Business Recovery Center in East Providence to provide support to affected businesses. Federal involvement also included a visit from U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg and Federal Highway Administrator Shailen Bhatt and the launch of a federal investigation by the U.S. Department of Justice into the circumstances surrounding the bridge's shutdown. State lawmakers held oversight hearings to question RIDOT officials about the crisis, and new Requests for Proposals (RFPs) were released

for the bridge replacement project, emphasizing accelerated bridge construction methods. By October 2024, Governor McKee announced the finalists for the Washington Bridge Rebuild Project.

### **Public Sentiment**

Understanding public sentiment and information needs proactively can lead to more effective communication and potentially better public support for critical infrastructure work (Burrows, J. 2024). This, in turn, contributes to building trust, enhancing reputation, and cultivating stronger local support and advocacy (Burrows, J. 2024). This information helped RIDOT develop more effective open communication strategies with the Providence community and potentially mitigate some of the public frustration and demand for information following the bridge's sudden closure.

Based on the campaign, the RIDOT most likely conducted the following research into public opinion:

To improve public communication and build support for infrastructure projects, RIDOT could have benefited from research into public perceptions of infrastructure maintenance and investment. Content analysis of message boards like Twitter would have helped gauge how well the public understood the reasoning behind closing the bridge, their willingness to support infrastructure funding (such as through taxes), and their expectations for public infrastructure. These insights could have guided RIDOT in explaining the necessity of the bridge closure and the decision to rebuild rather than repair. Understanding public attitudes toward proactive maintenance versus the risk of major failures would have helped manage expectations and strengthen communication around future projects (Becker, J., 2024).

Additionally, research into preferred communication channels and levels of public trust in RIDOT would have been valuable ( Growleady, 2024). Identifying how people prefer to receive updates—whether through social media, news outlets, public meetings, or online portals—and the type of information they want (e.g., traffic impacts, safety details, costs) could have led to more effective outreach during the bridge crisis. Public frustration following the closure highlights a missed opportunity for earlier, research-informed communication planning. Moreover, assessing public trust in RIDOT’s transparency and competence could have helped the agency proactively address skepticism and build confidence in its decisions and messaging ( Growleady, 2024).

### **Target Public**

- **Primary Target Public:**
  - Community residents: Commuters, businesses, and residents are affected by traffic congestion.

This group is the most directly and severely impacted by the Washington Bridge closure. Commuters faced "monumental traffic delays", "unbearable" traffic, and traffic jams likened to a "parking lot" or "the pandemic in reverse". Travel times significantly increased, with some commutes taking nearly 2 hours instead of 15 minutes. Local businesses in East Providence and Providence suffered "severe financial losses", leading to the opening of SBA recovery centers. Residents in neighborhoods near the bridge experienced detoured traffic, damaged local streets, and noise/vibration from demolition activities.

Targeting residents is essential because they are the primary users of the infrastructure and their daily lives are disrupted by the project. Their frustration is well-documented. Effective outreach to this group, using methods like public meetings or dedicated websites, allows the

agency to inform them about the situation, explain decisions like the need to close and rebuild, manage expectations about timelines, and potentially gather feedback on critical impacts like traffic or noise, which is a core principle of community engagement ( Sash & Company, 2024).

- Opinion Leaders:

- Formal: Rhode Island State Officials and Departments

While RIDOT is itself a state department, other state officials and departments (like the Governor's office, State Police, other agencies, and especially the legislature) are critical stakeholders with oversight responsibilities and influence. Effective communication with and among these bodies is vital for coordination, securing necessary support and funding (e.g., federal grants, GARVEE bonds), and maintaining political support during a crisis. The Governor's office and RIDOT held press conferences together and had an active coordinated effort throughout the campaign.

- Informal: Journalists and Community Leaders

Journalists and local media outlets play a critical role as information conduits to the wider public. They shape the public narrative through their reporting and questioning. Journalists were actively seeking information, sometimes facing difficulties, including being charged for public records before the Governor ordered refunds. The Washington Bridge crisis has been described as the "biggest story in Rhode Island since COVID" due to its wide impact.

Community leaders like mayors and city councilors voiced the concerns of their constituents, highlighting the impact on businesses and city infrastructure. They act as influential voices within their communities. Engaging with these informal opinion leaders allows for broader dissemination of information and can help build trust and support ( Sash & Company, 2024). Ignoring or mishandling communication with them can exacerbate frustration and spread

misinformation. Identifying key stakeholders, including community leaders, is a fundamental step in effective outreach ( Growleady, 2024).

- Local media: Media outlets covering the bridge closure and rebuild process.

As noted above, media outlets are the primary channel through which much of the public received information (or lack thereof) about the bridge closure and the state's response.

Maintaining positive and transparent relationships with local media is crucial for controlling the narrative and ensuring accurate information reaches the public. Conversely, strained relations, as suggested by instances of charging for records or officials declining interviews, can lead to negative coverage and decreased public trust. Utilizing media as a channel for updates is a key component of outreach strategies, especially for reaching a broad audience quickly ( Growleady, 2024).

### **Goals**

From December 2023 to 2026, the Rhode Island Department of Transportation and Governor McKee's administration launched a multi-channel campaign to inform and support Rhode Islanders, aimed at informing the community about the changes in the infrastructure of the Washington Bridge and the traffic flow in I-95.

The campaign's goal of informing the community about the changes in the infrastructure of the Washington Bridge and the traffic flow in I-95 makes significant sense about public relations efforts and best practices, particularly given the crisis context that emerged. The situation generated "massive controversy", "rising frustrations", and lawmakers venting "frustration over Washington Bridge". There were explicit calls for "more transparency" and "accountability". A primary goal of PR in such a climate is to acknowledge concerns, provide the

requested information (even when difficult), and demonstrate a commitment to transparency and accountability ( Growleady, 2024), which includes explaining the reasons for decisions like the closure and demolition. The goal of informing the community was not merely a public service announcement; it was a critical, ongoing public relations function necessitated by a major infrastructure failure and its profound impact, aiming to provide essential information, manage a volatile situation, address public concerns, and maintain credibility amidst a crisis that dominated public discourse.

Beyond explaining the problem and the plan, the campaign needed to provide the community with practical information to navigate the daily disruptions. This included information about changing traffic patterns, travel time charts and tools, recommended alternative routes, and resources for impacted businesses. Providing such useful and actionable information is a key function of community relations, directly assisting the affected population. The campaign served to explain the rationale behind state actions, such as the immediate closure due to critical safety concerns, the decision to demolish and rebuild, efforts to add temporary lanes, procurement processes for demolition and reconstruction, and securing federal funding. Effective PR communicates the "why" behind government decisions, particularly large-scale infrastructure projects with significant public impact ( Growleady, 2024).

Acknowledging the diverse needs and access points of the community, the communication effort utilized various channels, including a dedicated website, press releases, public meetings (virtual meetings occurred, and RIDOT agreed to hold public meetings), legislative briefings and hearings, media appearances (radio, TV interviews), and social media. A multi-channel approach is a best practice in PR to ensure messages reach different segments of the target audience effectively ( Sash & Company, 2024).

## **Output Objectives**

- Provide timely updates via press releases, public meetings, and the website.

Open and transparent communication is a "key to successful community relations".

"Regular Updates" are a best practice for communication, showing that an organization "values[s] transparency and is committed to keeping the community in the loop" (Becker, J., 2024). Utilizing multiple channels like social media, community meetings, and dedicated contact points (like a website) fosters two-way communication and ensures messages reach different segments of the community (Becker, J., 2024). Providing information through accessible platforms is crucial for effective community engagement (Becker, J., 2024).

- Implement and communicate traffic management measures to inform the public about lane adjustments and travel time tools.

Identifying and addressing community needs is a fundamental component of a community relations strategy (Becker, J., 2024). In this case, the overwhelming need was managing traffic disruption. Providing "valuable content like upcoming events, community news, and volunteer opportunities" is mentioned as an optimization for email newsletters, but the principle extends to other channels; providing useful information (like travel times) is valuable content ( Sash & Company, 2024). Effective community outreach involves tailoring techniques to resonate with the specific needs of the community. Offering practical solutions and information demonstrates authenticity and dedication to the communal well-being ( Growleady, 2024).

- Maintain transparency about project timelines through official channels.

Transparency is consistently highlighted as a key element of effective community relations. Building "Strong community relations can enhance brand reputation, build trust, and

create advocates" (Becker, J.,2024), and transparency is foundational to trust. In times of crisis, a strong reputation built on positive community relations is a significant asset. Maintaining trust during a long, disruptive project requires consistent and open communication about progress and challenges (Becker, J., 2024). This objective aligns with the PR principle of providing regular updates and using communication to build and sustain relationships ( Growleady, 2024). Addressing concerns about timelines is part of fostering open dialogue (Becker, J., 2024).

### Impact Objectives

- Ensuring Rhode Islanders felt confident in the state's response.

Residents were worried about state leadership's handling of the Washington Bridge partial closure, and lawmakers expressed frustration over the bridge situation during oversight hearings. There were reports of a lack of clear information regarding the problem and admissions of miscommunication amid structural concerns. The unexpected and disruptive nature of the closure created significant public concern and likely eroded confidence in the state's ability to manage the crisis effectively. Governor McKee and RIDOT Director Alviti faced scrutiny, and McKee's administration ordered an independent review and sent a senior aide to provide oversight to RIDOT's response, suggesting a recognized need to reinforce faith in the state's efforts. Aiming to build trust and enhance the brand's reputation are key reasons why community relations are important in PR (Becker, J., 2024), and in this context, the "brand" includes the state government and its agencies. Positive community relations contribute to a strong reputation, which is an asset in times of crisis (Becker, J., 2024). Therefore, rebuilding or maintaining confidence in the state's response is a crucial objective.

- Setting realistic expectations regarding the extended timeline, traffic disruptions, and challenges of the reconstruction while emphasizing efforts to accelerate the process.

The initial estimate for the bridge repairs was approximately three months, but it quickly became clear this was not realistic. Federal officials indicated a rebuild could take 1 to 2 years or until 2026, with Secretary Buttigieg calling the 2026 timeline "aggressive". Communicating challenges, the projected timeline, and the continued traffic impacts is essential for managing public expectations after the initial estimates proved wrong. Emphasizing efforts to accelerate the process, such as encouraging accelerated bridge construction methods and including financial incentives for early completion, shows proactive measures are being taken to mitigate delays. Setting clear, achievable, and measurable goals and avoiding being too vague in setting goals are key aspects of effective outreach planning ( Growleady, 2024).

- Encouraging safe driving behaviors amidst increased congestion by reinforcing key safety messages through state leadership and law enforcement.

Governor McKee stated his goal to reduce the number of accidents and encouraged safe travel practices, including following the reduced speed limit of 40 mph, avoiding lane switching, and staying off cell phones. He was joined by the Rhode Island State Police Superintendent to promote these messages. The state also implemented strategies like staging tow trucks and increasing police presence to reduce accident clearance times, highlighting the focus on safety and mitigating traffic impacts from incidents. Given the documented increase in accidents and the congestion, promoting safe driving behaviors is a direct response to a public safety issue exacerbated by the crisis.

- Communicating ongoing investigations and oversight efforts to reinforce the state's commitment to addressing the failure responsibly, even amid legal constraints.

The state legislature held oversight hearings and introduced legislation requiring monthly public reports from RIDOT, which are now being published. The Governor also ordered an

independent review and assigned a senior aide to provide oversight. While questions about liability and employee actions are tied to litigation and cannot be commented on publicly, communicating the existence of these investigations and oversight efforts demonstrates the state's commitment to transparency and accountability in the face of the crisis. It acknowledges public demand for answers and assures them that the causes and handling of the failure are being scrutinized, even if full details are restricted by legal processes.

### **Key Messages**

Based on the press releases and news updates provided by the RIDOT and the media coverage they received, we can determine what their key messages are:

*The sudden closure of the Washington Bridge was a necessary action to protect public safety following the discovery of critical structural failures. Ensuring the safety of commuters remains the top priority throughout the replacement process.*

This message aligns with the initial justification for the bridge's abrupt closure. The closure was described as a "necessary action" and the Administration's decision was described as being "in the interest of public safety". Engineers studying the bridge confirmed the critical nature of the issues. A draft report warned that "under sufficient load, the bridge could fail with limited to no advanced warning". Governor McKee stated his goal was to "keep Rhode Islanders safe," and his priority remains ensuring the project is done right while "keeping Rhode Islanders safe". Secretary Buttigieg also stated that the inspections "saved lives". Framing the closure as a necessary safety measure is a fundamental PR approach during a crisis, prioritizing public well-being.

*The McKee administration and RIDOT acted quickly to assess the situation, secure funding, and develop a plan for the bridge replacement. The state has worked diligently to issue RFPs, select qualified design-build teams, and accelerate construction efforts to restore full traffic capacity as soon as possible.*

The press releases and media coverage indicate that state officials were involved in responding to the crisis immediately after the critical issue was discovered. An extensive examination was conducted by engineering firms. The decision to demolish and replace the bridge was announced on March 14, 2024, following engineering recommendations. The state proceeded with a request for qualifications (RFQ) process for design-build teams, followed by a Request for Proposals (RFP) process. Two highly qualified design-build teams were selected as finalists. The RFP "highly encourages the use of accelerated bridge construction methods" and seeks proposals with "innovative solutions". Governor McKee stated his priority is to get a new bridge built "as soon as we can". Funding was secured, including a federal Mega grant for approximately \$220 million. Resuming demolition and moving up the substructure demolition timeline are presented as ways to ensure "more timely and efficient continuity of work" and accelerate the process. This message aims to convey competence and a proactive approach to resolving the issue quickly, which is important for public confidence (Becker, J. 2024).

*The state remains committed to clear and timely communication about the bridge replacement timeline, traffic impacts, and investigative findings. Governor McKee and RIDOT continue to provide public updates on the project's progress and investigations into the structural failure.*

The press releases and media coverage highlight calls for and actions taken regarding transparency and communication. Lawmakers introduced legislation requiring monthly public reports on the bridge status. RIDOT agreed to hold public meetings. A second virtual public meeting was held to answer questions, after acknowledging that the first meeting was not handled well. RIDOT maintains a website, where information, including monthly reports, dust and noise data, and travel time charts, is posted. Governor McKee and RIDOT Director Alviti have held numerous news conferences and briefings to provide updates. Governor McKee announced accountability would be coming, and a litigation team was hired to sort out questions of liability. This message emphasizes transparency and consistent updates, which are critical for managing public anxiety and maintaining trust during a prolonged disruption and investigation (Growleady 2024).

*RIDOT has implemented multiple strategies, including bypass lanes and lane adjustments, to mitigate congestion and keep traffic moving. Travel advisories and public awareness campaigns ensure that commuters have the latest information on closures and detours.*

Governor McKee stated the goal is to get people where they need to go with the "least amount of delay possible". The use of wreckers on the bridge has been a "very effective strategy" for clearing accidents quickly and saving time. Acknowledging the traffic impact and detailing mitigation efforts shows responsiveness to the public's daily hardship, a key element in maintaining public patience and support (Becker, J. 2024).

*The Washington Bridge replacement prioritizes innovative and accelerated construction methods to complete the project as efficiently as possible. The state is focused on delivering the best value through design-build contracts that emphasize speed, safety, and long-term durability.*

As mentioned, the RFP for the replacement project "highly encourages the use of accelerated bridge construction methods" and seeks "innovative solutions". Governor McKee stated the goal is to build a bridge that has a "state-of-the-art design, improves traffic flow and, most importantly, is built in a way where we can easily and comprehensively monitor its health over its long lifespan". This message manages expectations about the long-term nature of the project while highlighting the efforts to make it as fast, safe, and effective as possible, framing the considerable investment in terms of future benefits and efficiency.

*The state recognizes the economic hardships caused by the bridge closure and is working to minimize disruptions for local businesses and commuters. Investments in infrastructure improvements will provide long-term benefits for Rhode Island's transportation network and economy.*

The bridge closure has severely hurt East Providence businesses, with some reporting revenue drops of 40–60%. Business owners call the rebuild a “new crisis,” prompting state-level talks on reimbursements. Mayors have spoken publicly about local impacts. Engaging with the community and addressing their concerns demonstrates that your organization cares about the people and issues that matter locally. Fostering trust is a crucial aspect of public relations (Becker, J., 2024). By listening and responding, you create an environment where the community feels heard and valued, which strengthens the relationship and shows sincerity ( Growleady, 2024). To ease the burden, the state and SBA opened Business Recovery Centers in East

Providence. Governor McKee has also urged residents to shop local—clear signs of state action to support struggling businesses. With the closure causing major I-195 delays, the state acted swiftly—redirecting westbound traffic, opening bypass lanes, and testing new traffic patterns. RIDOT also launched travel planning tools and deployed wreckers to clear crashes faster. These efforts address the public’s biggest frustration head-on.

*Federal and state investigations are underway to determine the cause of the bridge failure and ensure accountability in past maintenance and inspection processes. The administration is cooperating fully with oversight efforts and remains committed to preventing similar infrastructure failures in the future.*

Public trust hinges on accountability. Governor McKee has promised a "day of accountability," and the state has hired a litigation team. Lawmakers are probing how recent inspections missed critical issues, and federal investigations are examining possible fraud in past maintenance claims. Addressing these concerns is vital to restoring confidence. By explicitly mentioning these points and linking them to actions (mitigation efforts, investigations, cooperation, infrastructure investment), the state's communication attempts to be responsive, empathetic, and forward-looking, which are key elements of crisis PR best practices (Becker, J.,2024).

## **Strategies**

### **One-Way Communication**

**Travel Time Tools:** RIDOT launched online travel time charts and dashboards to help drivers plan their routes and anticipate delays. These tools provided current conditions and

compared travel times to previous periods.

**Travel Time Charts**

*A Message from Rhode Island Governor Dan McKee: We apologize for the disruption that many Rhode Islanders are experiencing as a result of the Washington Bridge closure. These charts are an additional tool to help residents anticipate and plan for the added drive time on different days of the week at different times of the day. I thank you for your continued patience. Together, we will fix the bridge, we will do it right and we will keep Rhode Islanders safe.*

**HOW TO USE:** For each of the nine travel routes highlighted below, RIDOT has provided three helpful charts. The first chart shows the additional time needed to cross the bridge at different hours on different days, compared to early December. Please note that travel times vary for a number of unplanned factors, including weather conditions and accidents.

The "Current Conditions" chart compares this week's travel times to last week's and is updated every weekday. The third chart provides the travel times for the week prior to the bridge's closure in early December.

**Travel Reports**

The following charts provide travel time information over the prior month, compared to the same date range one year ago, prior to the bridge closure as well as traffic volume on the bridge. Travel Reports are updated weekly.

**TRAVEL TIME REPORT**

**TRAFFIC VOLUME REPORT**

### Traffic Management:

- Lane adjustments were implemented on the eastbound side of the bridge to maximize traffic flow.
- Bypass lanes were opened to ease congestion.

**Monthly Reports:** Legislation mandated the creation and publication of monthly reports on the status of the Washington Bridge project. These reports were made available on the RIDOT website.

In a rapidly unfolding crisis affecting traffic, safety, and daily life, there is an urgent need to quickly inform a broad audience about critical updates. Tools like press releases, a dedicated website for official information, and public reports serve to disseminate essential information

like safety updates, detour routes, traffic management plans, and project timelines. This type of communication is necessary for providing situational awareness and managing logistics for commuters and residents, even as other channels are used for feedback. The launch of travel time tools is another example of providing one-way information to help the public navigate the disruption.

Regularly providing updates about initiatives and outcomes shows transparency and commitment (Becker, J., 2024). Sharing valuable content through various channels like newsletters or content marketing (blogs, videos) keeps the community informed and can educate them about the organization's efforts or relevant issues ( Sash & Company, 2024).

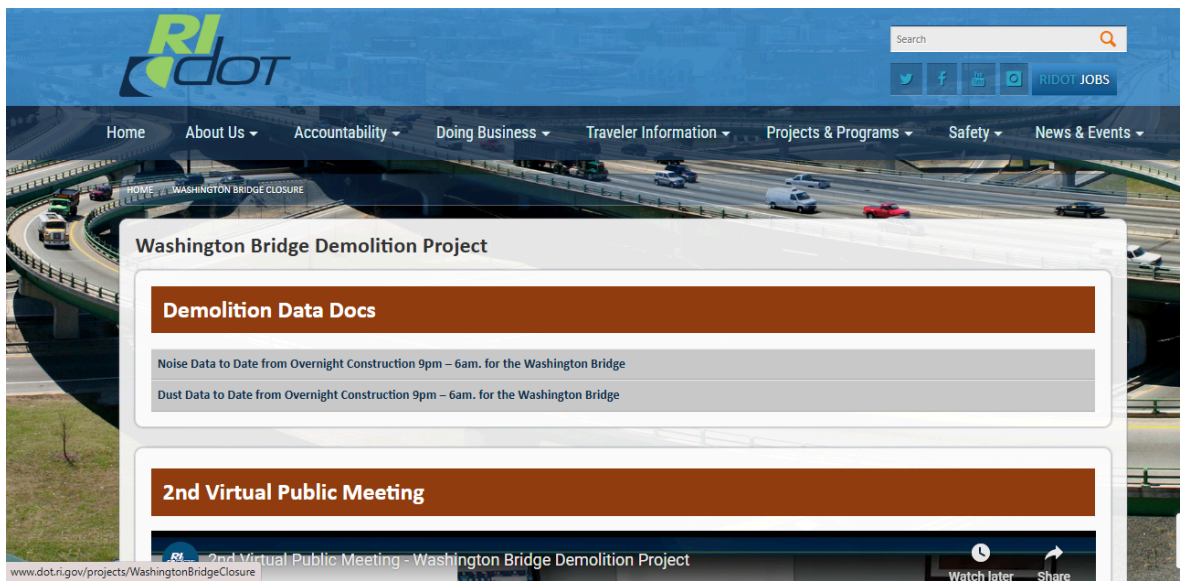
### **Opinion Leaders**

Key state officials like Governor Dan McKee and RIDOT Director Peter Alviti are central figures in the response, and their public communication is critical. The involvement of federal officials such as U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg and FHWA Administrator Shailen Bhatt, as well as members of the congressional delegation and local leaders, demonstrates the severity of the situation and brings additional authority and support to the state's efforts. Aligning with or informing these influential voices is essential for managing the public narrative and fostering cooperation.

Identifying and engaging opinion leaders and influencers can significantly amplify an organization's message and reach ( Growleady, 2024). Their endorsement or participation lends credibility and can help mobilize support for initiatives or causes. Partnering with local organizations also falls under this umbrella of leveraging other respected entities ( Sash & Company, 2024).

### **Salient Information**

**Press Releases:** The governor's office and RIDOT issued 18 press releases to disseminate salient information, such as project updates, contract announcements, and traffic advisories. The releases also announced the finalists for the rebuild project and communicated the release of the initial and final RFPs.



**Website:** A dedicated website

(<https://www.dot.ri.gov/projects/WashingtonBridgeClosure>) served as a central place for all information related to the bridge closure and replacement project. The site included travel time charts, project updates, monthly reports, press releases, inspection reports, FAQs, and helpful links. The website also provided access to live cameras and travel time information. To keep the public informed, the RIDOT website updates the public on the project, demolition progress, noise and dust data, and the latest health and safety reports. Officials have also collaborated with Baltimore experts to share insights on handling major infrastructure failures.



**Social Media:** Officials used social media platforms with the handle @ridotnews to share

updates and respond to public inquiries.

The primary concerns for the public during this crisis are immediate impacts: safety, traffic congestion, alternative routes, travel times, project timelines, and effects on businesses. Providing clear and accessible information on these topics, such as through the website's FAQ section, travel tools, and updates on traffic configurations, is paramount for managing public anxiety and enabling informed decisions. Efforts to address specific concerns like noise from demolition or access to bike paths also highlight the focus on information salient to affected residents.

Understanding community needs and focusing communication on relevant topics ensures efforts are impactful and resonate ( Sash & Company, 2024). Addressing salient issues directly demonstrates that the organization is listening and cares about what matters most to the community, which is fundamental for building trust (Becker, J., 2024).

### **Audience Participation**

**Community Listening Sessions:** The government committed to holding public meetings to address concerns and provide updates. A second virtual public meeting was held to answer questions about the demolition project.

The public reaction has included frustration and concern. Offering channels for feedback, questions, and concerns through community meetings and dedicated contact points allows the state to understand community needs, gather valuable insights, and tailor the response. The acknowledgment that the first public meeting "wasn't handled well" because it didn't allow questions, leading to a second meeting that did, is a direct illustration of the recognition and

implementation of the need for audience participation. Ignoring feedback is explicitly identified as a common mistake that makes efforts seem disingenuous ( Growleady, 2024).

Genuine engagement and two-way communication are crucial for building trust and goodwill (Becker, J., 2024). Community participation provides valuable feedback for needs assessment and allows organizations to tailor their strategies effectively ( Sash & Company, 2024). It helps the community feel valued and heard, fostering stronger, lasting relationships ( Growleady, 2024).

### **Third-Party Credibility**

Given the significant public scrutiny and questions surrounding the bridge failure and response, information coming solely from the state might be met with skepticism. Engaging independent engineering consultants (like McNary, Bergeron & Johannesen) to review the situation, conferring with expert bridge builders, and highlighting investigations by federal entities like the DOJ, FHWA, and OIG adds crucial layers of independent validation and oversight. Federal officials participating in visits and meetings also lend external credibility. The procurement process for the new bridge emphasizes highly qualified national/international firms, also leveraging third-party expertise and reputation.

Partnering with credible local organizations or engaging respected influencers lends credibility to messages and initiatives. This collaboration amplifies impact and leverages combined resources and expertise ( Sash & Company, 2024). Third-party validation can significantly enhance brand reputation and build trust ( Growleady, 2024).

The sheer volume of news articles and reports included in the sources, spanning from December 2023 to October 2024, indicates a sustained and significant level of media attention. Numerous news outlets, including the Providence Journal, Boston Globe, WPRI, WJAR, RI

Current, GoLocalProv, ABC6, The Public's Radio, NECN, BNN, PBN, Johnston Sun Rise, and WBUR, have consistently reported on the various aspects of the bridge closure. The timeline of articles shows a continuous stream of updates regarding the initial closure, government response, federal investigation, demolition plans, traffic impacts, and public meetings. There are references to weekly appearances by RIDOT Director Peter Alвити on radio shows, regular press briefings, and legislative oversight hearings that were covered by the media. The passage of legislation mandating monthly public reports on the bridge status further suggests ongoing media and public interest, leading to regular reporting.

According to the *7 steps to successful community outreach*, open and regular communication with the public and stakeholders is a cornerstone of best practices in infrastructure projects. This includes timely updates, clear explanations of decisions, and readily accessible project information. The Washington Bridge case aligns with this by providing a dedicated website, issuing regular press releases, and holding public meetings. The initiation of monthly reports to legislative oversight committees also suggests an effort towards transparency. However, the transcript from October 17, 2024, indicates that a public meeting was acknowledged to "not have been handled well" due to scheduling conflicts with a Jewish holiday, suggesting a potential area for improvement in stakeholder sensitivity.

Governor McKee hired a third-party construction firm (McNary, Bergeron & Johannesen) to inspect the bridge, and their report recommended replacement. Multiple engineering firms studied the bridge after its closure. RIDOT engaged with 11 expert companies, including multinational firms, in the design and construction process. These experts recommended the removal of the existing bridge piers down to the mud level, considering the Seekonk River as a navigable waterway. The RFP process involves contractors bringing their own specialists and

design consultants to propose rebuild solutions. According to *Sash & Company*, engaging independent experts and considering a range of solutions are vital in infrastructure projects. The Washington Bridge case demonstrates this through the hiring of independent inspectors and the involvement of multiple engineering firms. The open competition in the RFP phase, where contractors propose their designs, is also in line with best practices for fostering innovation and identifying optimal solutions.

**Tactics:**

- **Provide timely updates via press releases, public meetings, and *the website*:**

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) and Governor Dan McKee's office have used several methods to provide updates and respond to the Washington Bridge situation, while also facing scrutiny regarding communication and transparency. RIDOT has actively utilized press releases to disseminate information regarding the Washington Bridge project. These releases have announced key developments such as the final Request for Proposal (RFP) for the replacement project, the posting of an initial RFP for the rebuild, the RFP for the demolition project, and the general RFP for the replacement project. Press releases have also been used to promote safe travel practices, announce traffic configuration changes, add a third lane, open bypass lanes, and update the bridge response.

Public meetings have also been conducted as part of the project communication efforts. For instance, a second virtual public meeting specifically regarding the Washington Bridge Demolition Project was held on October 17, 2024. At this meeting, RIDOT officials, including Director Peter Alviti, provided updates and answered questions from the public about topics such as environmental controls, dust and vibration mitigation, noise mitigation, construction schedules, temporary transportation options, design, and financial aspects like GARVEE bonds.

Director Alviti publicly acknowledged that a prior meeting, specifically the first one, was not handled well and apologized for scheduling it on a Friday night, which was a Jewish holiday.

The project website, [Washington-bridge.com](http://Washington-bridge.com), is used to post various data and reports related to the project. This includes demolition data and documents, such as noise data and dust data from overnight construction. The site also features travel time charts, travel reports comparing current and past travel times and traffic volume, and links to inspection reports and photos dating back to 2015. Under legislation passed into law on May 7, 2024, RIDOT submits monthly Washington Bridge Snapshot Reports, which are posted on the website and include updates on repairs, alterations, replacement efforts, crash data, and traffic pattern adjustments. The first of these reports was based on an expected project completion by August 2026.

However, there was a serious breakdown in initial communication regarding the structural issues. Emails obtained by the Providence Journal revealed an early warning about serious problems on Friday, December 8, 2023, around 1:40 p.m., from a concerned engineer. Yet, Governor Dan McKee stated he was not told about any issues until more than 72 hours after they were discovered. RIDOT Director Peter Alviti also indicated he wasn't notified for three days after the department received an email on December 8. This delay in notification to top officials, despite internal emails showing the alarming findings were presented to RIDOT on December 8, raised questions about who knew what and when. This communication lapse contributed to lawmakers questioning RIDOT's handling of the crisis and criticizing the initial lack of transparency. Joint House and Senate oversight committees convened hearings to discuss the Washington Bridge closure. During one such hearing on February 12, 2024, lawmakers grilled RIDOT Director Peter Alviti Jr. and other officials for nearly four hours. Questions focused on how the bridge's critical condition went undetected for so long and the state's plans

for fixing or replacing it. Lawmakers expressed frustration shared by constituents about traffic congestion and the rapid deterioration of the bridge's condition.

The situation led to citizens and lawmakers demanding more information and transparency, which resulted in proposed legislation for monthly updates. East Bay lawmakers, whose constituents were heavily impacted, were particularly vocal in calling for regular comprehensive updates from RIDOT. Legislation introduced in the House and Senate mandated monthly public reports on the status of the I-195 bridge project, detailing repair, traffic, and cost updates, to be provided to the General Assembly and posted publicly online. These calls underscored rising frustrations about the bridge closure and the perceived lack of clear information. In response to this pressure, RIDOT Director Peter Alviti apologized at the joint oversight committee hearing on February 12, 2024, and claimed to have been transparent throughout the crisis. He stated he took full responsibility for the fallout from the closure. Governor Dan McKee also promised accountability, stating that the day of reckoning for those responsible for the state's position is coming soon.

Furthermore, RIDOT has taken steps to improve communication and provide updates, such as agreeing to hold public meetings after receiving reports on how to resolve the closure. As mentioned, the establishment of the project website and the provision of monthly reports are also part of these efforts, responding to the earlier criticism of poor communication. Governor McKee also dispatched his Senior Deputy Chief of Staff, Joseph Almond, to oversee RIDOT's response and coordination for all operations related to the Washington Bridge, ensuring that Director Alviti would run everything related to the bridge through Almond "to make sure we are all on the same page".

- **Adjustments and travel time tools:**

RIDOT announced plans in late February to increase the number of travel lanes on the Washington Bridge to three in each direction. This was part of an effort to alleviate congestion and cut travel delays on the I-195 corridor. The plan involved narrowing the existing lanes on the span currently carrying traffic in both directions. The I-195 Eastbound 3-Lane Configuration was scheduled to begin for the morning commute on April 10. The change to three lanes on the westbound side involved restriping the highway during evening and overnight hours and was scheduled to be complete by 9 am on Saturday, April 20. On the westbound side, the left and center lanes are 10 feet wide, and the far-right lane is 11 feet wide, with trucks restricted to the far-right lane. RIDOT, along with consultants and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) experts, certified that the bridge structure could carry the extra lanes.

In addition to the three-lane plan, RIDOT tested new traffic patterns. For instance, starting at 10 p.m. on a Friday in early February, RIDOT tested reducing the number of lanes on I-195 West from three to two near the East Shore Expressway entrance in East Providence. This was done in hopes of alleviating congestion. Providence also looked at adjusting traffic flow within the city due to the bridge closure, including a proposed ordinance to ban large trucks weighing over 25 tons from parts of Angell, Waterman, and Gano streets near the Henderson Bridge. RIDOT implemented other measures to manage traffic flow and clear incidents quickly. This included staging tow trucks along the route and ramping up police presence on the bridge, which helped reduce the time to clear accidents from 30 minutes to 21 minutes. The tow trucks have been effective in clearing accidents quickly, saving time for thousands of vehicles. Work on the bridge, such as milling and paving or demolition, has also required temporary lane closures on I-195 and road closures beneath the bridge.

RIDOT has communicated these adjustments through various channels. The addition of the third travel lane was announced via press releases. Traffic pattern changes, such as the three-lane configuration and temporary closures for work, have been communicated through press releases and travel advisories. Governor McKee and RIDOT Director Peter Alviti also promoted safe travel practices in advance of the change to three lanes on the westbound side.

RIDOT launched new tools to help drivers navigate the closure. These include a travel time dashboard that shows "current travel times," updated every five minutes, for 12 different routes. RIDOT also created Washington Bridge travel time charts. These charts show the change in travel times on different days and hours for nine different routes. The "Current Conditions" chart compares weekly travel times and is updated every weekday, while another chart provides travel times from the week before the bridge's closure. Travel Reports are also provided, updated weekly on the project website, showing travel time information over the prior month compared to the same date range a year ago, along with traffic volume. These travel time tools and charts are available on the project website. Governor McKee described these charts as an additional tool to help residents anticipate and plan for added drive time.

- **Maintain transparency about project timelines through official channels:**

Despite initial timelines being uncertain and changing, the state has been providing updates on the project's progress and expected completion dates through press conferences, reports, and the official website. The full procurement schedule is published in the RFP. Lawmakers also introduced a bill to ensure monthly public reports on the bridge's status.

- **Strengthen public confidence in the state's decision-making and infrastructure management:**

The state involved and consulted with various external parties to assess the bridge's condition and plan the path forward. This included hiring third-party construction firms and engineering firms to inspect and analyze the bridge. McNary, Bergeron & Johannesen, a third-party construction firm hired by Governor McKee, corroborated the critical nature of the decision to close the bridge. The administration also announced it would hire an outside contractor to conduct a forensic analysis and an independent expert to provide oversight and review of that analysis. Furthermore, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Administrator Shailen Bhatt and federal experts visited the site, toured the bridge, and participated in meetings with state officials. RIDOT Director Alвити noted that the FHWA administrator and staff were quite present in project management meetings and participated in processes like reviewing RFPs, bringing national expertise that was helpful. The involvement of independent firms and federal authorities can lend credibility to the state's assessments and decisions, suggesting a commitment to thoroughness and reliance on unbiased expertise.

Under the legislation passed into law on May 7, 2024, RIDOT is required to submit monthly Washington Bridge Snapshot Reports. These reports are publicly available on the RIDOT website on or before the first of each month and are also provided to the General Assembly oversight committees. These reports cover a rolling 4-week period and are based on an expected project completion by August 2026. The website serves as a central source for information, including travel time charts, reports (including the monthly snapshot reports and weekly travel reports), press releases, demolition data, background information, and FAQs. Between these two formal, regular reporting mechanisms, the state has been able to provide consistent updates on the project's status, including repair, traffic, and cost updates, enhancing transparency and accountability.

While there were oversight hearings with state lawmakers where RIDOT Director Alviti and other officials testified, the state also committed to and held public meetings. RIDOT agreed to hold public meetings about the westbound closure after engineering reports were expected. A second virtual public meeting regarding the demolition project was held, and Director Alviti publicly acknowledged that the first meeting was not handled well, apologizing and stating that the second meeting was scheduled to answer questions. The recording of this second meeting is available on the project website. Holding these meetings, particularly after criticism of earlier communication, demonstrates a willingness to directly engage with the public and address their concerns.

Governor Dan McKee announced in late January that he was sending his Senior Deputy Chief of Staff, Joseph Almond, to RIDOT to provide oversight and cross-agency coordination for all operations related to the Washington Bridge. Almond, who has a background in municipal leadership and public safety, was described as being charged with overseeing RIDOT's response and ensuring that everything related to the bridge would run through him to ensure everyone was "on the same page". This action, interpreted by some as adding a layer of scrutiny, was presented.

By implementing these measures, the state appears to be responding to public and legislative demands for greater transparency and demonstrating a commitment to involving external expertise and establishing clear channels for ongoing communication about the project's status and timelines. State officials, including Governor McKee and Director Alviti, have held multiple press conferences and briefings to announce key decisions, such as the need to replace the bridge, provide updates on assessments, and promote safe travel practices. At an oversight hearing, Director Alviti publicly apologized for the bridge closure and took responsibility. While

not specifically about timelines, such acknowledgements can contribute to rebuilding trust by demonstrating accountability.

- **Successfully manage detours and alternate routes to reduce congestion-related delays:**

Initially, after the sudden closure of the westbound span on December 11, 2023, all westbound traffic was diverted to alternate routes. By December 14, 2023, crews had built a temporary way for two lanes of westbound traffic to share half of the eastbound span, and two-way traffic resumed on I-195 over the Washington Bridge. Recognizing that accidents increased after the bridge failure, the state took steps to reduce the time needed to clear them. This included staging tow trucks along the route and ramping up police presence on the bridge. These actions are credited with dropping the time to clear accidents from 30 minutes to 21 minutes. Tow trucks have been noted as an effective strategy for clearing accidents quickly. The closure caused significant traffic delays on Interstate 195, leading to traffic being diverted through surrounding areas, particularly East Providence and Providence. This diverted traffic impacted local streets, causing congestion and damage to roads. East Providence also implemented changes to manage congestion, including making certain roads accessible to residents.

RIDOT launched new tools in early February 2024 to help drivers navigate the closure, including a travel time dashboard updated every five minutes showing current travel times for multiple routes. They also created Travel Time Charts showing changes in travel times on different days and hours for various routes. Weekly Travel Reports are published on the project website, comparing current travel times and traffic volume to the same period a year before the closure. A dedicated website served as a central hub for travel time charts, reports, press releases,

demolition data, background info, and FAQs, including questions about alternate routes. Specific travel advisories and press releases are issued for traffic pattern changes and work that impacts travel. Officials planned to start running a 500-seat ferry between Bristol and Providence. RIDOT provided free ferry service to help alleviate traffic, and over 2,800 passengers used the service by early January 2024. The state is in discussions with RIPTA to mitigate and improve alternate modes of travel, including looking at additional bus routes and potential bus rapid transit with a dedicated right of way on the new bridge.

Despite all of this, mass media consistently highlighted that traffic congestion and delays persisted despite efforts. The closure created "significant delays", a "commuter crisis", "massive controversy among commuters", "severe financial losses" for businesses, and "unbearable" traffic. Commutes took significantly longer. The "unpredictability of travel conditions" was a central and aggravating aspect of the crisis. While the addition of a third lane was hoped to shorten travel time and ease congestion, overnight work for repaving and restriping temporarily reduced lanes for the first two weeks of the change. Business owners continued to suffer ramifications from the closure months later. The influx of cars jamming local streets was noted as putting infrastructure, pedestrians, and motorists at risk. Providence officials urged RIDOT to help pay for damaged roads due to the detours. East Providence police faced harassment from frustrated drivers.

- **Keep the public informed and regain the public trust:**

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) established and maintains a website that serves as a central source for information about the project. This site hosts various resources, including demolition data, monthly and weekly reports, travel time charts, press releases, background information, and answers to frequently asked questions. Data on noise and

dust from demolition activities is also posted publicly on the website. Weekly Travel Reports are published on the project website, comparing current travel times and traffic volume to the same period a year before the closure. State officials, including Governor McKee and RIDOT Director Alviti, have issued press releases and held news conferences to announce significant developments, such as the decision to demolish and replace the bridge, update the public on assessments and project timelines, and promote safe travel practices. Following Access to Public Records Act requests, the state released emails related to the bridge closure, providing some insight into the timeline of events and internal communications. Governor McKee also ordered RIDOT to refund news outlets that were charged differing amounts for similar document requests. Governor McKee appointed his Senior Deputy Chief of Staff, Joseph Almond, to provide oversight and cross-agency coordination for all operations related to the Washington Bridge. This move was framed as an effort to ensure everyone was "on the same page". Almond has participated in legislative oversight hearings. By tracking news coverage of the bridge closure, public reaction, and political discourse, the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) analyzed the tone and framing of media reports to gauge public sentiment. Examining public concerns, complaints, and misinformation about the bridge closure led to RIDOT monitoring engagement trends on platforms like Twitter. RIDOT also began addressing concerns and questions via its website.

Despite these efforts, regaining public trust has been challenging, partly due to issues with communication and transparency. Initial information about the timeline for repairs was inaccurate. The original estimate of approximately three months for fixing the bridge became the timeframe just for diagnosing the problem. There were initial delays in officials, including the Governor, being notified about the critical issues with the bridge after the Department of

Transportation received an email about it. RIDOT Director Peter Alviti conceded to having provided incorrect information regarding the structural integrity of the bridge. Lawmakers expressed "rising frustrations" about the bridge closure and cited a "lack of clear information" as being "particularly frustrating for so many people". They specifically pushed for laws requiring more reporting and transparency. Public confidence in state leadership regarding the handling of the closure was noted as a concern among residents. Charging media outlets for public records related to the bridge closure drew criticism and required intervention from the Governor. These efforts, from dedicated online resources and formal reporting requirements to public meetings and apologies, demonstrate the state's response to the need for increased communication and transparency in the wake of the crisis, even while acknowledging the difficulties encountered in maintaining public confidence. Open and transparent communication is identified in public relations strategies as key to building trust and ensuring efforts are understood and appreciated by the community.

**Budget:**

The State of Rhode Island provided information and links related to the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) loan program in response to the Washington Bridge emergency. Rhode Island Commerce also offered Emergency Business Assistance and supported the establishment of an SBA Business Recovery Center in East Providence to aid affected businesses. While the SBA issued the loans, the state's efforts to coordinate and promote the center likely incurred administrative costs. Additionally, grants for small businesses were made available.

Public safety and traffic management expenses also mounted. In the first week of the bridge closure, Providence and East Providence spent over \$73,000 on police overtime to

manage detours. East Providence officers later received an additional \$20 per hour for detailed work.

Several communication and operational initiatives incurred further costs:

- The creation and maintenance of the dedicated website, [Washington-Bridge.com](http://Washington-Bridge.com), involved hosting, development, and content management expenses.
- A senior aide, Joseph Almond, was reassigned to oversee RIDOT's response, representing a significant commitment of high-level staff time.
- Monthly public reporting and the publication of air and vibration sensor data required staff time and resources.
- The development and deployment of travel time tools and charts on the website also added to costs.
- Responding to public records requests resulted in expenses, including initial charges to news outlets by RIDOT, which were later refunded after public backlash.
- Traffic pattern changes and stoplight reprogramming led to increased overtime at the Providence Department of Public Works.
- Tow trucks were staged, and police presence was heightened to reduce accident clearance times. This was an operational strategy considered highly effective.
- RIDOT also offered free ferry service between Bristol and Providence to ease travel during the partial bridge closure. By January 4, 2024, the ferry had served 2,814 passengers.

# TIMELINE

## December 2023

Dec 8 (*internal RIDOT email*): Initial warning signs of bridge issues.

Dec 11: RIDOT closes the Washington Bridge westbound due to a critical structural failure.

Dec 12: Governor McKee's administration gives first public update.

Dec 13: Another press release update from McKee; support rod failure from the 1960s bridge suspected.

Dec 14–19:

McKee defends emergency contractor choice.

An outside contractor was hired for forensic analysis.

## January 2024

Jan 3: RI Department of Administration hires McNary Bergeron & Johannesen for peer review.

Jan 17: East Bay lawmakers demand regular updates from RIDOT.

Jan 22–24: RIDOT announces the damage is worse than thought; full rebuild is likely.

Jan 25–26: Media scrutiny increases. Federal investigators open a probe into RIDOT's bridge spending.

Jan 27–31:

Feds search for fraud, false claims.

McKee sends a deputy to RIDOT for oversight.

Emails reveal early warnings and a lack of urgency that have been leaked.

Oversight hearing scheduled for Feb 12.

## February 2024

Feb 1–2: McKee criticizes delay in notification; RIDOT agrees to public meetings.

Feb 5: Federal Highway Administrator tours bridge.

Feb 8: Oversight hearing preparations begin.

Feb 9: RIDOT launches travel time tracking tools.

Feb 12: Oversight hearing held. RIDOT Director apologizes; lawmakers demand answers.

Feb 13–15: Snowstorm worsens traffic; engineers' reports expected end of month.

Feb 19–21: Reports on contractor donations; McKee announces plan to add a third lane.

Feb 22: Draft report makes no firm recommendations.

Feb 26: RIDOT begins lane expansion work.

Feb 29: Lawmakers propose monthly bridge reports; RIDOT admits to past misinformation.

## **March 2024**

Mar 4: Calls grow for long-term funding solutions.

Mar 12: Marks three months of closure.

Mar 14: McKee announces demolition and full replacement. Estimated time: 2 years; Cost: \$250–300M.

## **April 2024**

Apr 10: RIDOT begins 3-lane configuration eastbound.

Apr 21: RIDOT schedules milling and paving on I-195 near the bridge.

Apr 30: RIDOT posts RFP for bridge replacement project.

## **October 2024**

Oct 11: Travel advisory issued: temporary road closures for demolition.

Oct 15: Washington Bridge demolition resumes; new procurement opens.

## **December 2024**

Dec 10: Governor announces finalists for rebuild project.

Dec 18: New RFP released for the rebuild.

## **January 2025**

Jan 24: Final RFP posted for the replacement project.



In response to the abrupt closure of the westbound Washington Bridge on December 11, 2023, the Rhode Island government and RIDOT launched a multi-channel communication campaign aiming to keep the public informed and manage the crisis. The decision was made immediately after a consultant's report indicated a "critical failure". A variety of channels were utilized to reach different audiences. Significant efforts were made to mitigate congestion caused by the closure. State leadership and law enforcement reinforced safe driving behaviors amid increased congestion. While the state took numerous actions, the timeline of events, particularly in the initial phase and regarding project estimates, presented significant challenges to the state's efforts to manage the crisis and maintain public confidence. A key point of criticism was the delay in notifying top officials (Governor, RIDOT Director) about the critical structural issues after they were identified by a consultant on December 8, 2023. This "serious breakdown" in initial communication likely hindered a rapid, coordinated, and transparent initial public response, contributing to the perception of miscommunication and lack of transparency that emerged early on. The initial expectation of approximately three months for repairs proved highly inaccurate, instead becoming the timeframe for diagnosing the problem. The subsequent announcement of complete demolition and rebuilding with an expected completion timeline of "into 2026" was a significant shift. Despite efforts to implement traffic management measures and provide tools quickly, mass media consistently highlighted that traffic congestion and delays persisted. While mitigation strategies were implemented over time, they were not fully effective in resolving the daily disruption caused by the closure throughout the timeline.

The overall timeline of the crisis response began with frustration and a perceived lack of transparency. Despite later efforts to improve communication and provide more regular updates, regaining public trust has been challenging, partly due to the initial communication issues and

changing project timelines. Media coverage often reflected a critical tone, focusing on the "transportation disaster", questions of accountability, and the ongoing negative impacts. Therefore, while the state's response involved numerous proactive steps across communication, traffic management, and project planning over the timeline of the crisis, the initial communication failures and the subsequent necessity to revise project timelines significantly impacted the perceived effectiveness of the state's handling of the situation and contributed to a challenging environment for rebuilding public confidence.

### **Evulation**

Traffic disruptions remain a major issue, as the bridge's demolition and rebuilding will continue to cause delays until its expected completion in late 2026. The Washington Bridge closure has created significant challenges, from traffic congestion to economic struggles. Despite temporary lane adjustments, commuters still face heavy congestion. Governor McKee, along with state police and RIDOT, has urged drivers to travel safely due to an increase in accidents on I-195 following the bridge failure. Local businesses, particularly in East Providence, have suffered financially due to reduced traffic. The situation has highlighted broader concerns about Rhode Island's aging infrastructure. The focus now is on rebuilding the bridge with modern safety features while improving transparency and communication with the public.

The success of the Washington Bridge Closure PR campaign was measured by looking at how well the public was informed, whether the media covered the project with a positive attitude, whether traffic solutions were working, and whether they were able to meet and address the concerns of the community. Media coverage was reviewed by RIDOT and the Rhode Island Department of Administration to check for accuracy and assess how well reporters shared key messages. A social media audit was also conducted, particularly on X, to track public sentiment

and see what journalists and media outlets were saying. The tone of the media coverage appears to be largely critical, marked by scrutiny of the state's handling of the situation, questioning of accountability, and highlighting the negative impacts on the public. Reports focused on the "abrupt closure", describing it as a "critical structural failure" and a "transportation disaster". Media outlets questioned how the bridge's condition went undetected and reported on alleged "lies" and "false information" from officials. There was significant coverage of the federal investigation into the use of federal funds, with a focus on potential "false claims for payment". The frustration of commuters and the negative impact on businesses were frequently highlighted. Lawmakers' "frustration" and "inquisition" of RIDOT officials were reported. The complexity and "quirky, one-off antique" nature of the bridge design were also discussed, potentially contributing to the understanding of the failure. Even Governor McKee acknowledged the "disruption that many Rhode Islanders are experiencing", suggesting the media effectively conveyed the negative consequences. Reports also covered instances of RIDOT allegedly providing "incorrect information" and initially charging news outlets for public records related to the closure, which drew criticism. While some reports focused on efforts to mitigate the impact, such as adding lanes and providing travel time tools, these were often presented within the context of the ongoing crisis and the initial failure. The dominant tone remained inquisitive and critical of the circumstances leading to and the management of the Washington Bridge closure. The Rhode Island government's communication campaign surrounding the Washington Bridge closure shows evidence of attempting to meet the stated objectives above, though with varying degrees of consistent fulfillment.

Overall, the communication campaign demonstrated efforts to provide updates, manage traffic, encourage safety, and acknowledge investigations. However, the persistent lack of public

confidence and the challenges in setting and maintaining realistic timelines suggest that certain aspects of the campaign could have been more effective. The legal constraints surrounding potential liability also understandably limited the level of detail that could be shared regarding the causes of the bridge failure. The Rhode Island government utilized press releases, public meetings, and a dedicated website to provide updates, implement and communicate traffic management measures, and share project timelines. While efforts were made to meet these objectives, the campaign faced challenges in maintaining consistent transparency and managing public expectations, particularly regarding the evolving project timelines and the initial response to the bridge's critical failure.

There were also many areas for improvement in best practices. Rhode Island leaders, including Governor McKee, stated they weren't notified about the structural issues for days after they were discovered. Effective community relations, as outlined by Burrows, rely on transparency and regular updates. Delays in internal communication can hinder the ability to provide timely and transparent information to the public, potentially eroding trust.

Their public listening session transcript also included a question about why participants weren't allowed to ask questions during the first public meeting. Burrows' strategies highlight the significance of two-way communication and creating channels for feedback, questions, and concerns. Restricting questions in an initial public forum can be perceived negatively by the community and goes against the principle of open dialogue. It's also worth noting that RIDOT admitted to "miscommunication amid structural concerns". The best practices guide emphasizes that open and transparent communication builds trust. Any admission of miscommunication suggests an area where the flow of information to the public could have been improved to maintain a stronger, more trusting relationship. While the later efforts of RIDOT to provide

updates through a website and hold a second, more interactive public meeting align with best communication practices, the initial phases of the Washington Bridge crisis appear to have suffered from a lack of sensitivity in community engagement and potential gaps in timely and open communication, as viewed through the lens of Burrows best practices.

## References

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## APPENDICES



## NEWS COVERAGE: Washington Bridge

### MARCH 2024

Katherine Gregg and Patrick Anderson / Providence Journal / March 29, 2024

#### **'Kinda sketchy': Barletta claims 'industrial espionage' in contaminated soil case. Here's the lawsuit.**

PROVIDENCE – The U.S. Department of Justice has already won a \$1.5-million settlement from the company for trucking contaminated soil to Olneyville for the renovation of the Routes 6 and 10 interchange.

<https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/politics/state/2024/03/29/mass-based-barletta-asserts-its-was-victimized-by-a-union-with-ties-to-its-rival-cardi-corp/73120163007/>

Christopher Shea / RI Current / March 28, 2024

#### **'Reckoning' on Washington Bridge delayed: Forensic analysis now due next week at earliest**

Looks like the “day of reckoning” Gov. Dan McKee promised might have to wait an additional week. State Department of Transportation (RIDOT) Director Peter Alviti Jr. told Rhode Island Current Thursday that the much-anticipated forensic analysis detailing who is to blame for last December’s sudden closure of the western portion of the Washington Bridge will be completed “hopefully next week.”

<https://rhodeislandcurrent.com/briefs/reckoning-on-washington-bridge-delayed-forensic-analysis-now-due-next-week-at-earliest/>

Christopher Shea / RI Current / March 28, 2024

#### **Providence Marathon canceled, Washington Bridge closure partly to blame**

Sorry, runners. The Providence Marathon and Half Marathon have been canceled “due to unforeseen challenges, including the Washington Bridge closure,” organizers announced Thursday.

<https://rhodeislandcurrent.com/briefs/providence-marathon-canceled-washington-bridge-closure-partly-to-blame/>

Christopher Boardman / ABC 6 / March 28, 2024

#### **Small businesses impacted by Washington Bridge closure to head to State House**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WLNE) — Small businesses affected by the Washington Bridge closure will be able to meet with the House Small Business Committee on April at the State House. The session will take place at 3 p.m. in Room 101.

<https://www.abc6.com/small-businesses-impacted-by-washington-bridge-closure-to-head-to-state-house/>

Melanie DaSilva / WPRI / March 28, 2024

### **Providence Marathon canceled; Washington Bridge closure partially blamed**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — The Providence Marathon and Half Marathon races have been canceled this year, organizers announced Thursday. Organizers said the cancellation was due to “unforeseen challenges,” including the closure of the Washington Bridge.

<https://www.wpri.com/sports/providence-marathon-canceled-washington-bridge-closure-partially-blamed/>

Christopher Boardman / ABC 6 / March 28, 2024

### **2024 Providence Marathon canceled due to Washington Bridge closure, other issues**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WLNE) — The 2024 Providence Marathon and Half Marathon have been canceled. In a statement on the Providence Marathon website, “unforeseen challenges, including the Washington Bridge closure” were cited. The marathon was scheduled for May 5.

<https://www.abc6.com/2024-providence-marathon-canceled-due-to-washington-bridge-closure-other-issues/>

Brian Amaral / Boston Globe / March 28

### **How the Key Bridge collapse in Baltimore differs from R.I.’s Washington Bridge shutdown**

Will the rebuilding of the bridge in Maryland mean less attention and fewer resources for the bridge in Rhode Island? Governor McKee’s administration has downplayed that possibility.

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/03/28/metro/baltimores-tragic-bridge-collapse-differs-ri-bridge-shutdown-important-ways-experts-say/>

Antonia Noori Farzan / Providence Journal / March 27, 2024

### **Could Baltimore bridge disaster happen in Rhode Island? What to know about the risks.**

On a foggy night in 1975, a gasoline tanker plowed into the Mount Hope Bridge. It was “only by chance” that the gasoline tanks didn’t rupture, which “would have probably caused an explosion and fire resulting in the loss of the vessel, the bridge, and possibly human life,” the State Pilotage Commission later determined. In other words, a nightmare scenario like the one that unfolded in Baltimore early Tuesday morning could happen here.

<https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/local/2024/03/27/could-a-large-ship-cause-a-baltimore-francis-scott-key-like-bridge-collapse-in-ri/73103892007/>

Jacqui Gomersall / WPRI / March 25, 2024

### **12 Responds: Can the eastbound bridge hold more weight?**

PROVIDENCE (WPRI) — RIDOT in late February announced plans to increase the number of extra lanes on the eastbound Washington Bridge from two to three. It was part of an attempt by the agency to alleviate congestion, but one viewer reached out to 12 News, asking if the state considered the additional weight on the bridge with the plan to add more lanes.

[https://www.wpri.com/news/12-responds-can-the-eastbound-bridge-hold-more-weight/?utm\\_campaign=socialflow&utm\\_source=t.co&utm\\_medium=referral](https://www.wpri.com/news/12-responds-can-the-eastbound-bridge-hold-more-weight/?utm_campaign=socialflow&utm_source=t.co&utm_medium=referral)

NBC 10 NEWS / WJAR/ March 22, 2024

### **Providence looks to adjust traffic flow as yearslong Washington Bridge project looms**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WJAR) — With the Washington Bridge closure expected to last years, the city of Providence is looking to make adjustments to traffic flow within the city. A proposed ordinance would ban large trucks weighing more than 25 tons from driving on parts of Angell, Waterman and Gano streets near the Henderson Bridge. "Even if the traffic is bad at that moment, those tractor-trailers that are just passing through need to stay on the highway," Mayor Brett Smiley said.

<https://turnto10.com/news/washington-bridge-closure/westbound-east-providence-rhode-island-interstate-195-tractor-trailer-big-trucks-weight-limit-ordinance-restrict-city-streets-henderson-march-22-204>

NBC 10 NEWS / WJAR/ March 22, 2024

### **East Providence Mayor Bob DaSilva urges people to support city businesses**

East Providence Mayor Bob DaSilva is talking about the impact of the Washington Bridge closure on his community. The westbound side of the bridge was abruptly closed in December over safety concerns. The state said the bridge will be demolished and replaced in a project that's expected to continue into 2026. The closure has created significant delays for traffic on Interstate 195.

<https://turnto10.com/politics/10-news-conference/washington-bridge-closure-demolition-replacement-construction-east-providence-rhode-island-mayor-bob-dasilva-support-city-businesses-march-22-2024>

NBC 10 NEWS / WJAR/ March 21, 2024

### **Providence City Council wants to limit trucks on Washington Bridge detours**

The Providence City Council introduced an ordinance on Thursday that would put a weight limit on heavy trucks traveling on streets surrounding Washington Bridge detours. Council members said the amendment focuses on preventing cut-throughs and damage to roads caused by heavy trucks.

<https://turnto10.com/news/local/providence-city-council-introduces-law-to-limit-trucks-near-washington-bridge-detours-southern-new-england-rhode-island-march-21-2024>

Christopher Boardman / ABC6 / March 21, 2024

### **House finance committee worries Washington Bridge could push smaller projects aside**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WLNE) — For RIDOT Director Peter Aliviti it seems to be business as usual, with a full schedule of construction projects planned even though the Washington Bridge's construction is the main concern. Aliviti telling the house finance committee that over the next year, the DOT will be working on 62 new projects, 31 of those bridge related. That volume of work is a concern to the finance committee as the Washington Bridge's reconstruction will have to be an all hands on deck approach.

<https://www.abc6.com/house-finance-committee-worries-washington-bridge-could-push-s-maller-projects-aside/>

Ted Nesi / WPRI / March 20

**Buttigieg tight-lipped as Mass. officials press for \$1B to start rebuilding Cape Cod bridges**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg isn't ready to say whether Massachusetts is about to get the final infusion of cash needed to replace the Sagamore Bridge, but insists he understands what a high priority it is for the state. Buttigieg was in Rhode Island on Tuesday to discuss another major bridge challenge in the region — the shuttered westbound I-195 Washington Bridge — but also touched on the Cape Cod bridges during an exclusive interview with 12 News.

<https://www.wpri.com/news/local-news/se-mass/buttigieg-tight-lapped-as-mass-officials-press-for-1b-to-start-rebuilding-cape-cod-bridges/>

Chris Shea / RI Current / March 20

**Washington Bridge looms over FY2025 transportation budget hearing**

RIDOT Director Peter Alviti tells lawmakers bridge replacement should not impact timeline for projects elsewhere in the state. What would typically be a routine budget hearing for the head of the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) in any other year quickly turned Wednesday into a probe about the impact of replacing the Washington Bridge on infrastructure projects in the rest of the state. Speaking before the House Finance Subcommittee on Environment and Transportation on Wednesday, RIDOT Director Peter Alviti Jr. said his department is slated to repair 147 bridges by the end of 2024, along with plans to hire 20 workers to clean up litter along the state's highways.

<https://rhodeislandcurrent.com/2024/03/20/washington-bridge-looms-over-fy2025-transportation-budget-hearing/>

Patrick Anderson / Providence Journal / March 20, 2024

**Vincent Barletta resigns as Barletta CEO after Washington Bridge, DUI**

The longtime head of the construction company doing many of the largest and most heavily scrutinized transportation projects in Rhode Island — including the westbound Washington Bridge and the Route 6-10 Interchange — has stepped down as CEO.

<https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/politics/state/2024/03/20/vincent-barletta-resigns-as-barletta-ceo-after-washington-bridge-dui/73041991007/>

Martina Haggerty / Boston Globe / March 20

**Providence must lean into modern transportation solutions during bridge rebuild, not undo them**

City and state leaders must move away from outdated approaches and embrace proven strategies to tackle traffic congestion head-on, writes an urban planner who helped lead expansion of Providence's network of bike lanes. Providence Mayor Brett Smiley recently suggested that the city might ease traffic congestion during the projected 2-year closure of the Washington Bridge westbound by potentially removing some of its bike lanes. It's

crucial to address the shortsightedness of such a suggestion. Sacrificing affordable, sustainable transportation options is not the answer. City and state leaders must move away from outdated approaches and embrace proven strategies to tackle traffic congestion head-on. Investments in robust public transit and bike networks should be central to any plan to ease traffic congestion.

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/03/21/metro/providence-must-lean-into-modern-transportation-solutions-during-washington-bridge-rebuild-not-undo-them/>

Sanai Rashid / Brown Daily Herald / March 20

### **Business owners react to I-195 Washington Bridge demolition announcement**

On March 14, Gov. Dan McKee announced that the I-195 Washington Bridge, which was partially shut down due to structural concerns last December, will now be demolished and rebuilt entirely. The bridge allows drivers coming from Providence to travel to the east side of Providence and access Seekonk, Massachusetts. According to a report released that same day by McNary, Bergeron & Johannesen — a third-party construction firm hired by McKee to inspect the bridge — closing the bridge was “the right and responsible decision.” The report further recommended that the bridge be replaced.

<https://www.browndailyherald.com/article/2024/03/business-owners-react-to-i-195-washington-bridge-demolition-announcement>

Steph Machado & Brian Amaral / Boston Globe / March 19

### **R.I. timeline for reopening Washington Bridge is ‘aggressive,’ US Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg says**

PROVIDENCE — US Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg said Rhode Island’s timeline of reopening the Washington Bridge in 2026 is “aggressive,” an indication that a faster bridge reconstruction is unlikely as Rhode Islanders gear up for years of traffic delays. Buttigieg toured the westbound side of the Washington Bridge over Interstate 195 on Tuesday, which has been closed since December when it abruptly shut down due to a “critical failure.”

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/03/19/metro/washington-bridge-rhode-island-buttigieg-says-timeline-to-reopen-is-aggressive/>

Christopher Boardman / ABC6 / March 19

### **Alviti to Buttigieg: ‘We’ll build this one to last 100 years’**

EAST PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WLNE) — The U.S. Transportation Secretary arrived in Rhode Island Tuesday morning and tour infrastructure projects around the state. The main part of Pete Buttigieg’s tour of course will be the Washington Bridge, which was just announced last week will have to be rebuilt, after the westbound side of the bridge had been shut down for three months. Initial estimates for the cost of the project are between \$250 and \$300 million, hoping to complete the demolition and reconstruction of the new bridge by September 2026.

<https://www.abc6.com/alviti-to-buttigieg-well-build-this-one-to-last-100-years/>

PBN Staff / March 19, 2024

### **U.S. Transportation Secretary Buttigieg tours Washington Bridge damage**

PROVIDENCE – U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg on Tuesday said replacing the Washington Bridge needs to be a swift process although he acknowledged that the goal of complete reconstruction by 2026 is “an aggressive estimate.” Buttigieg joined Gov. Daniel J. McKee, East Providence Mayor Roberto L. DaSilva and other leaders Tuesday morning to tour the damage that forced the closure of the westbound side of the bridge on Dec. 11. The transportation secretary then attended a ribbon-cutting ceremony marking the start of the Woonasquatucket River Greenway Improvement Project.

<https://pbn.com/u-s-transportation-secretary-buttigieg-tours-washington-bridge-damage/>

Ryan Belmore / What’s Up Newp / March 19

### **During Sec. Buttigieg’s visit to Rhode Island, Reed urges RIDOT & USDOT to act rapidly to replace the Washington Bridge**

Reed, a senior member of the Appropriations Committee, also joins head of USDOT for groundbreaking of Woonasquatucket River Greenway Improvement Project and for tour of Building Futures apprenticeship program. U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Secretary Pete Buttigieg knows the importance of speed. Just days after Rhode Island’s Governor and state transportation officials acknowledged the need to demolish and replace the now-closed Washington Bridge westbound on Interstate 195, President Joe Biden’s top transportation official was on the scene to tour the bridge and meet with local stakeholders. U.S. Senator Jack Reed is urging the state, and Secretary Buttigieg, to act quickly and wisely to replace the westbound section of the Washington Bridge.

<https://whatsupnewp.com/2024/03/during-sec-buttigieg-s-visit-to-rhode-island-reed-urges-ridot-usdot-to-act-rapidly-to-replace-the-washington-bridge/>

Brian Amaral / Boston Globe / March 19, 2024

### **President of Barletta construction firm steps down, will remain chairman**

PROVIDENCE — The head of the company that was working on the Washington Bridge westbound when problems were discovered in the span late last year is stepping down as president, though he will retain the title of chairman of the company’s board, a spokeswoman said. Vincent Barletta’s move at the family-owned companies that bear his name, Barletta Heavy Division and Barletta Engineering Corp., was announced internally on Friday, spokeswoman Patti Doyle said. He will be replaced as president of the companies by Mike Foley, who is getting a promotion after a long tenure at the company, Doyle said.

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/03/19/metro/washington-bridge-rhode-island-president-of-major-construction-firm-steps-down/>

Steve Klamkin / WPRO / March 19, 2024

### **U.S. Transportation Secretary Buttigieg tours doomed Washington Bridge**

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg pledged to help Rhode Island rebuild its crippled Washington Bridge following a tour of the span Tuesday, calling the state’s two-year timetable for a replacement, “an aggressive estimate that needs to be met, and we’re going to do everything we can to help make that a reality.” Buttigieg crossed the

closed westbound span from East Providence to Providence along with a full compliment of local and state officials and all four members of the Rhode Island Congressional delegation Tuesday morning, later telling reporters that federal support toward the estimated \$300 million price tag could exceed a standard funding formula used in most public construction projects, which ordinarily provide an 80% federal match to a 20% state contribution, citing various federal programs.

<https://www.997wpro.com/2024/03/19/u-s-transportation-secretary-buttigieg-tours-doomed-washington-bridge/>

Patrick Anderson / Providence Journal / March 19

**Sec. Buttigieg visited the Washington Bridge. Here's what he said about rebuilding efforts.**

PROVIDENCE – U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg Tuesday called Rhode Island's plan to open a new westbound Washington Bridge sometime in 2026 "aggressive," but one that "needs to be met." Standing on the bridge's Gano Street off-ramp after touring the condemned structure, Buttigieg told reporters he recognizes "the impact this is having on so many people."

<https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/politics/state/2024/03/19/us-transportation-secretary-pete-buttigieg-walks-washington-bridge-on-visit/73026991007/>

Eli Sherman, Ted Nesi & Tim White / WPRI / March 18

**'Get me talking points': DOJ docs reveal top officials' private texts about Washington Bridge**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — Rhode Island officials have sent thousands of pages of documents about the westbound Washington Bridge to the U.S. Department of Justice, as investigators probe how federal funds have been spent on the doomed structure. The documents — obtained by Target 12 through a public-records request — include years of emails, photographs, plans, inspections, contracts and other communications between state officials and private contractors that have worked on the bridge over the years. They also include dozens of text conversations between high-ranking state officials, including Gov. Dan McKee and R.I. Department of Transportation Director Peter Alвити. The texts offer a window into the frantic efforts by state officials to respond to the crisis on Dec. 12, the morning after the bridge was closed because an engineer had discovered a critical safety issue.

<https://www.wpri.com/target-12/get-me-talking-points-doj-docs-reveal-top-officials-private-texts-about-washington-bridge/>

Frank Maradiaga / WJAR / March 18

**Buttigieg praises inspections that 'saved lives' during tour of Washington Bridge**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WJAR) — U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg says lives were saved by inspections that caught the faults in the Washington Bridge. He visited Rhode Island on Tuesday and toured the bridge that has created a commuter crisis in the state for

the past few months. During the tour, Buttigieg was flanked by Governor Dan McKee and other Rhode Island leaders, all in bright safety vests.

<https://turnto10.com/news/local/us-transportation-secretary-buttigieg-to-tour-washington-bridge-southern-new-england-rhode-island-massachusetts-bridges-cars-trains-buses-com-muter-crisis-march-18-2024>

Christopher Boardman / ABC6 / March 18, 2024

### **Buttigieg to tour Washington Bridge during visit to Rhode Island**

WASHINGTON, D.C. (WLNE) — United States Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg will visit Rhode Island Tuesday to view infrastructure and transportation projects, including the Washington Bridge. Buttigieg will tour the Washington Bridge and meet with state officials to discuss the reconstruction plan. This comes after the announcement that the westbound half of the bridge will need to be replaced.

<https://www.abc6.com/buttigieg-to-tour-washington-bridge-during-visit-to-rhode-island/>

Chris Allen / PBN / March 15

### **'Here we go again': Washington Bridge rebuild poses new challenge for businesses**

PROVIDENCE – Just when many local businesses thought the threat of external forces such as the pandemic and a possible recession were behind them, the announcement that the Washington Bridge needs to be rebuilt has them facing a new crisis threatening bottom lines. State officials disclosed Thursday that reopening the bridge may not happen until 2026, a long period even if the state hits its mark, which many consider unlikely.

<https://pbn.com/here-we-go-again-washington-bridge-rebuild-poses-new-challenge-for-a-businesses/>

Kathy Gregg / Providence Journal / March 15, 2024

### **'Now we move forward': Bridge teardown news brings relief – and worry – from mayors and lawmakers**

PROVIDENCE – "Is it good news? No," said East Providence Mayor Bob DaSilva when it became official that the broken westbound Washington Bridge connecting his city to the rest of Rhode Island is coming down. "I think it's the news that people need to hear. That there's a plan in place, that there's a timeline in place so we can prepare and plan and make accommodations," he said Thursday. "That's probably the best answer you can give right now. I mean, if the bridge needs to be replaced, it needs to be replaced." "Now we move forward," he finished, summing up the unhappy but resigned responses of East Bay legislators, General Assembly leaders and Providence Mayor Brett Smiley, who presides over the city on the other side of the Washington Bridge that has seen its streets backed up and battered by the diverted traffic.

<https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/politics/2024/03/15/mayors-smiley-dasilva-react-to-washington-bridge-teardown-news/72978202007/>

Dan McGowan / Boston Globe / March 15, 2024

### **Governor McKee's big bridge bet**

Governor Dan McKee has set some lofty goals for Rhode Island by 2030: Catch Massachusetts in student achievement by 2030, raise personal incomes by at least \$20,000, and build a healthier state for all. But his most ambitious promise came Thursday when he announced that he wants the westbound side of the Washington Bridge to be rebuilt in two years at a projected price tag of \$250 million to \$300 million. My colleagues Steph Machado, Brian Amaral, and Ed Fitzpatrick have all the details [here](#).

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/03/15/metro/governor-mckees-big-bridge-bet/?event=event25>

Alexandra Leslie, Eli Sherman, Ted Nesi & Shaun Towne / WPRI / March 14/15

### **Washington Bridge will need to be rebuilt; construction will go into 2026**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — Rhode Island officials announced Thursday that the westbound Washington Bridge needs to be rebuilt, confirming widespread fears that the structure will be out of service for an extended period of time. Gov. Dan McKee and R.I. Department of Transportation Director Peter Alviti revealed the decision at an afternoon news conference, where they shared findings from multiple engineering firms that have been studying the bridge since its abrupt closure on Dec. 11.

[https://www.wpri.com/traffic/i-195-washington-bridge-closure/washington-bridge-will-need-to-be-rebuilt-mckee-set-to-announce-at-3-p-m/?utm\\_source=t.co&utm\\_campaign=social\\_flow&utm\\_medium=referral](https://www.wpri.com/traffic/i-195-washington-bridge-closure/washington-bridge-will-need-to-be-rebuilt-mckee-set-to-announce-at-3-p-m/?utm_source=t.co&utm_campaign=social_flow&utm_medium=referral)

Steph Machado, Brian Amaral & Ed Fitzpatrick / Boston Globe / March 14

### **Washington Bridge in R.I. must be rebuilt; won't reopen until 2026**

An engineering firm said the new highway bridge would be completed in two years at the earliest. It could cost \$300 million. / The state of Rhode Island plans to demolish and rebuild the westbound side of the Washington Bridge on Interstate 195, a massive project that will mean delays and disruptions in people's everyday lives for two years or more.

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/03/14/metro/washington-bridge-closure/>

Eli Sherman & Tim White / WPRI / March 14/16

### **'A nightmare': 30 years of traffic and frustration on the Washington Bridge**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — As Rhode Island motorists brace for what could be years of traffic jams on the Washington Bridge, many may also be feeling a sense of déjà vu. They're not wrong. The two distinct structures that make up the Washington Bridge and carry I-195 between Providence and East Providence have been under construction in one way or another for much of the past three decades. And concerns and frustration tied to those efforts have been relatively consistent throughout.

<https://www.wpri.com/target-12/a-nightmare-30-years-of-traffic-and-frustration-on-the-washington-bridge/>

Kathy Gregg, Patrick Anderson & Wheeler Cowperthwaite / Providence Journal / March 14

### **Westbound Washington Bridge needs to be demolished. What it means for the state.**

The westbound Washington Bridge will not be saved, Gov. Dan McKee announced Thursday after engineers recommended Rhode Island tear the structure down as soon as possible to begin a multi-year replacement project. If demolition of the bridge begins by this summer, drivers can expect a new bridge to open by the end of 2026, an engineering firm hired by McKee to analyze the findings said. Building a new bridge is expected to cost up to \$300 million. The 1968 bridge was closed Dec. 11 to guard against collapse. Since then state bridge experts and engineering consultants have been analyzing the structure, which carried Interstate 195 West over the Seekonk River.

<https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/politics/state/2024/03/14/live-rhode-island-officials-give-update-on-washington-bridge-fate/72971008007/>

Mark Fortier / NECN / March 14

### **I governor says troubled Washington Bridge must be replaced**

Rhode Island Gov. Dan McKee announced Thursday that the westbound span of the Washington Bridge must be replaced. "Today we're announcing that we will be replacing the bridge," he said, "but also accountability and the day of reckoning for those who are responsible for the position we're in and the position the people of the State of Rhode Island are in, that day is coming and it is coming very soon."

<https://www.necn.com/news/local/ri-governor-dot-to-hold-briefing-thursday-on-washington-bridge-plans/3185641/>

Steve LeBlanc / Associated Press / March 14

### **A critical Rhode Island bridge will need to be demolished and replaced**

A critical Rhode Island bridge that was partially shut down over safety concerns in December will need to be demolished and replaced, Gov. Dan McKee said Thursday. An independent review of the Washington Bridge — which carries Interstate 195 over the Seekonk River from Providence to East Providence and serves as a key gateway to Providence — found additional structural deficiencies requiring that it be replaced, McKee said at an afternoon press conference. The state must replace both the bridge's superstructure and part or all of the substructure, he said.

<https://apnews.com/article/rhode-island-washington-bridge-closure-b6843610619bb76111458c58b4f38502>

Chris Shea / RI Current / March 14

### **Onward: The Washington Bridge needs to be demolished and replaced**

Work expected to take two years and will cost up to \$300 million. The news commuters have been waiting for is finally here, and it's really not a surprise: Almost the entire western portion of the Washington Bridge will be demolished and rebuilt, a process that will take until at least early 2026. And a forensic audit — detailing who is to blame for what has become Rhode Island's transportation and economic crisis of the decade — will be ready in another two weeks.

<https://rhodeislandcurrent.com/2024/03/14/onward-the-washington-bridge-needs-to-be-demolished-and-replaced/>

Steph Machado / Boston Globe / March 14

### **Providence bike lanes could be removed to alleviate gridlock from Washington Bridge closure**

“Permanent solutions” to traffic woes in Providence will be considered now that state officials have said the bridge closure on I-195 west will last years. The long-debated bike lanes on South Water Street could be on the chopping block as the city grapples with how to accommodate two more years of traffic caused by the continued closure of the Washington Bridge on Interstate 195.

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/03/14/metro/providence-bike-lanes-could-be-removed-to-alleviate-gridlock/>

NBC10 News / March 14

### **McKee: 'We will be replacing the bridge'**

EAST PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WJAR) — Rhode Island Gov. Dan McKee and Department of Transportation Director Peter Alvit said Thursday that engineering reports found problems with the westbound Washington Bridge that leave demolition and replacement as the only viable option.

<https://turnto10.com/news/washington-bridge-closure/repair-replace-decision-expected-briefing-governor-dan-mckee-rhode-island-department-of-transportation-director-peter-alvit-i-east-providence-interstate-195-westbound-span-march-14-2024>

GoLocalProv News Team & Kate Nagle / March 14

### **McKee Defends Alvit's Lies, Gov Claims “Day of Accountability Coming” on Washington Bridge**

Rhode Island Governor Dan McKee announced that the failed westbound Washington Bridge, which has been closed since December, is going to be replaced to the tune of \$250 to \$300 million dollars. However, McKee and Rhode Island Department of Transportation (DOT) Director Peter Alvit have a track record of providing false information about Washington Bridge. Alvit's lies track back to the 6/10 project, where he denied contaminated material was improperly dumped in the Olneyville neighborhood.

<https://www.golocalprov.com/news/McKee-Defends-Alvit-Lies-Gov-Claims-Day-of-Accountability-Coming-on-Was>

Ted Nesi / WPRI / March 14

### **Washington Bridge will need to be rebuilt; construction will go into 2026**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — Rhode Island officials announced Thursday that the westbound Washington Bridge needs to be rebuilt, confirming widespread fears that the structure will be out of service for an extended period of time. Gov. Dan McKee and R.I. Department of Transportation Director Peter Alvit revealed the decision at an afternoon news conference, where they shared findings from multiple engineering firms that have been studying the bridge since its abrupt closure Dec. 11.

<https://www.wpri.com/traffic/i-195-washington-bridge-closure/washington-bridge-will-need-to-be-rebuilt-mckee-set-to-announce-at-3-p-m/>

Gino DeAngelis / ABC6 / March 14

### **Engineers recommend Washington Bridge be replaced**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WLNE) — The structural analysis of the Washington Bridge has determined the bridge should be torn down. At a briefing held by Gov. Dan McKee and Department of Transportation Director Peter Alviti, structural engineers who performed the analysis said that the structural deficiencies on the bridge “cannot be viably repaired.” The firm, McNary, Bergeron & Johannesen, recommends to replace the bridge, deck, girders, piers, and foundation to meet design code.

<https://www.abc6.com/engineers-recommend-washington-bridge-be-replaced/>

Christian Winthrop / Newport Buzz / March 14

### **GOVERNOR MCKEE ANNOUNCES WASHINGTON BRIDGE MUST BE REPLACED**

Governor Dan McKee, alongside Rhode Island Department of Transportation Director Peter Alviti and Senior Deputy Chief of Staff T. Joseph Almond, conducted a briefing on Thursday to announce that the Washington Bridge must be torn down and replaced. Following the discovery of two failed tie-rods in December 2023, an extensive examination of the bridge was conducted by a team of engineering firms. Their findings, corroborated by independent review from McNary, Bergeron & Johannesen, emphasized the critical nature of the Administration’s decision to close the bridge on December 11, 2023, in the interest of public safety.

<https://www.thenewportbuzz.com/governor-mckee-announces-washington-bridge-must-be-replaced/47801>

GoLocalProv News Team / March 14, 2024

### **McKee to Hold on Press Conf on Washington Bridge, Has Refused to Answer Questions About Contractor**

On Thursday, Rhode Island Governor Dan McKee will be holding a press conference along with Rhode Island Department of Transportation Director Peter Alviti, the Governor's Senior Deputy Chief of Staff Joseph Almond, and a representative from McNary, Bergeron & Johannesen.

<https://www.golocalprov.com/news/mckee-to-hold-on-press-conf-on-washington-bridge-has-refused-to-answer-ques>

Patrick Anderson / Providence Journal / March 14

### **'You don't see this every day': Why is the Washington Bridge so strange?**

Unique. Old-fashioned. Complex. Many terms have been used to describe the beleaguered westbound Washington Bridge over the last four months. But among civil engineers, the structure comes off as a quirky, one-off antique, a curiosity of another era.

<https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/politics/state/2024/03/14/why-rhode-islands-washington-bridge-is-so-complex-and-strange/72950075007/>

Shaun Towne & Ted Nesi / WPRI / March 13-14

**RI officials set to announce Washington Bridge decision at 3 pm**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — After three months of anticipation, Rhode Islanders are poised to learn the fate of the westbound Washington Bridge. Gov. Dan McKee has called a news conference for Thursday at 3 p.m. to discuss the much-anticipated findings of various engineering reports examining the bridge's condition. Those inspections were ordered following the bridge's abrupt closure back on Dec. 11. 12 News will air the news conference live on WPRI 12 and here on WPRI.com.

<https://www.wpri.com/traffic/i-195-washington-bridge-closure/ri-officials-set-to-announce-washington-bridge-decision-thursday/>

Janine L. Weisman / RI Current / March 13

**Governor schedules briefing on Washington Bridge structural analysis for Thursday**

It's the day we've all been waiting for: The results of a structural analysis on the Washington Bridge are apparently ready to be revealed. Gov. Dan McKee will hold a briefing with a representative from bridge engineering firm McNary, Bergeron & Johannesen Thursday at 3 p.m. at the Department of Administration at 1 Capitol Hill in Providence. Rhode Island Department of Transportation Director Peter Alviti Jr. and Joseph Almond, McKee's senior deputy chief of staff who has been assigned to oversee the state's cooperation with a federal inquiry of the Washington Bridge crisis, will also participate in the briefing.

<https://rhodeislandcurrent.com/briefs/governor-schedules-briefing-on-washington-bridge-structural-analysis-for-thursday/>

Patrick Anderson / Providence Journal / March 14

**The Washington Bridge has been closed three months. We may know its fate Thursday.**

Gov. Dan McKee and state transportation experts are set to reveal the fate of the ailing westbound Washington Bridge on Thursday. Three months after the bridge was closed to guard against collapse, McKee is set to hold a media briefing with state Director of Transportation Peter Alviti Jr. and engineering consultants hired to analyze the condition of the bridge and what to do about it. The briefing is scheduled for 3 p.m.

<https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/politics/state/2024/03/13/what-will-happen-to-the-washington-bridge-rhode-island-may-know-thursday/72963755007/>

Sarah Doiron / WPRI / March 12

**RIDOT begins shifting Washington Bridge lanes in bid to ease congestion**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — The Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) has begun making room for a third lane in each direction on the Washington Bridge, of which one side has been closed for three months. In a statement to 12 News Tuesday afternoon, RIDOT's Charles St. Martin said workers are in the process of installing the new three-lane configuration, which will hopefully ease traffic congestion along the I-195 corridor.

<https://www.wpri.com/traffic/i-195-washington-bridge-closure/ridot-begins-shifting-washington-bridge-lanes-in-bid-to-ease-congestion/>

Christopher Boardman / ABC6 / March 11

### **Today marks three months since Washington Bridge closure**

EAST PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WLNE) — Monday marks three months since the Washington Bridge westbound lane closure and the beginning of the commuter crisis it created. The closure has triggered massive controversy among commuters and business owners alike as the Rhode Island Department of Transportation has continued to evaluate the bridge and answering the ultimate question: Repair or replace? According to RIDOT Director Peter Alviti, the answer is coming soon.

<https://www.abc6.com/today-marks-three-months-since-washington-bridge-closure/>

Kaitlin Gehlhaus / ABC6 / March 11

### **3 months later, locals businesses still suffer ramifications of Washington Bridge closure**

EAST PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WLNE) — It's been three months since the emergency closure of the Washington Bridge, and businesses continue to feel the effects. One manager said business is still down anywhere between 40 and 60%, and they are running out of ideas to improve sales. "It's slow," said Jessica Medeiros, operations manager of The Burrito Bowl. "Look around, there is nobody here."

<https://www.abc6.com/3-months-later-locals-businesses-still-suffer-ramifications-of-washington-bridge-closure/>

NBC 10 News / March 7

### **Alviti gives update on Washington Bridge assessment**

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation Director Peter Alviti, spoke with NBC 10's Gene Valicenti on WPRO Thursday morning. Alviti said the assessments and reports on the Washington Bridge will be done soon, with a plan created in about a week. He also said construction for a new bridge has yet to be determined.

<https://turnto10.com/news/local/alviti-gives-update-on-washington-bridge-assessment-southern-new-england-rhode-island-wpro-new-bridge-construction-work-march-7-2024>

Ryan Belmore / Whats Up Newp / March 6

### **Whip Lawson, East Bay legislators introduce legislation requiring regular, comprehensive Washington Bridge updates**

Similar to a bill introduced recently in the House of Representatives, the legislation (2024-S 2727) would mandate that RIDOT provide monthly reports on developments related to the Washington Bridge to the General Assembly.

<https://whatsupnewp.com/2024/03/whip-lawson-east-bay-legislators-introduce-legislation-requiring-regular-comprehensive-washington-bridge-updates/>

Brian Amaral / Boston Globe / March 6, 2024

### **R.I. 'getting close' to decision on how to rebuild Washington Bridge, RIDOT director says**

EAST PROVIDENCE — Rhode Island Department of Transportation Director Peter Alviti said Thursday that the state is about a week away from putting together plans on rebuilding the

Washington Bridge westbound. Alviti, in his weekly appearance on Gene Valicenti's radio show on WPRO, described the work as putting a "new bridge structure in place." What's left to be determined is how extensive that rebuilding work will be, how long it will take, and how much it will cost. But the DOT is working with consultants to consolidate information and create a work plan for it, Alviti said.

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/03/07/metro/ri-getting-close-decision-how-rebuild-washington-bridge-ridot-director-says/>

Brian Amaral / Boston Globe / March 6, 2024

### **Could a temporary span ease R.I.'s Washington Bridge woes?**

PROVIDENCE — As the state waits to see what has to be done to resolve the Washington Bridge westbound closure, experts are exploring one potential option: a temporary bridge that would get more traffic through Interstate 195 until a permanent fix is in place. It's not clear whether such a bridge would be feasible, where it would go, or how long it would take. Bridges, even temporary ones, are complicated, especially when they're taking busy highway traffic over a river. But Acrow, a New Jersey-based company that makes modular steel bridges, said a representative has been in discussions with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation and various engineers about whether an Acrow bridge would work here.

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/03/06/metro/could-a-temporary-span-ease-ris-washington-bridge-woes/?p1=StaffPage>

Kayla Fish / WPRI / March 6, 2024

### **Councilors want RI to reimburse East Providence businesses hurt by I-195 bridge closure**

EAST PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — Businesses in East Providence have suffered severe financial losses since the westbound side of the Washington Bridge abruptly closed in December — and the state of Rhode Island should pick up the tab. That's according to East Providence City Councilor Rick Lawson, who introduced a resolution at Tuesday's meeting urging Gov. Dan McKee and the R.I. General Assembly to include money in the state budget for business owners, who have had no control over the closure of the bridge.

<https://www.wpri.com/traffic/i-195-washington-bridge-closure/councilors-want-ri-to-reimburse-east-providence-businesses-hurt-by-i-195-bridge-closure/>

Michael DiBaise / Rhode Island Current / March 4, 2024

### **The road not yet taken: Washington Bridge troubles highlight need for a long-term funding solution**

The prospect of repairing or fully replacing the Washington Bridge has created greater urgency to address Rhode Island's diminishing ability to pay for its transportation infrastructure. Whatever the path forward, the bridge project is almost certain to cost more than the \$78 million for repairs already underway when the structure was suddenly shut down in December.

<https://rhodeislandcurrent.com/2024/03/04/the-road-not-yet-taken-washington-bridge-troubles-highlight-need-for-a-long-term-funding-solution/>

## FEBRUARY 2024

Gino DeAngelis / ABC 6 / February 29, 2024

### **Rhode Island lawmakers introduce legislation for monthly updates on Washington Bridge**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WLNE) — Rhode Island House Majority Whip Katherine Kazarian introduced legislation that would require the Rhode Island Department of Transportation to produce a monthly public report on the status of the Interstate 195 bridge project.

<https://www.abc6.com/rhode-island-lawmakers-introduce-legislation-for-monthly-updates-on-washington-bridge/>

Brian Crandall / WJAR / February 29, 2024

### **Lawmakers propose bill calling for more transparency on closed Washington Bridge**

East Bay lawmakers want a law calling for more reporting and transparency from Rhode Island Department of Transportation on the Washington Bridge mess. A bill introduced by Rep. Katherine Kazarian (D-East Providence, Pawtucket), and cosponsored by a half dozen other East Bay representatives, would require RIDOT to provide monthly public reports on the status of the Washington Bridge westbound closure.

<https://turnto10.com/news/washington-bridge-closure/lawmakers-propose-bill-calling-for-more-transparency-closed-washington-bridge-report-public-status-westbound-timeline-feb-29-2024>

Eli Sherman / WPRI / February 29, 2024

### **New bill would require monthly public updates on Washington Bridge status**

EAST PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — East Bay lawmakers have filed legislation that would require the state's transportation agency to publicly provide a monthly report detailing repair, traffic and cost updates associated with the ongoing Washington Bridge closure.

<https://www.wpri.com/target-12/new-bill-would-require-monthly-public-updates-on-washington-bridge-status/>

Kate Wilkinson / WPRI / February 29, 2024

### **Data: Crash calls have more than doubled since Washington Bridge closure**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — In November of last year, the most common call for service on I-195 was a motor vehicle stop. But data obtained by Target 12 from Rhode Island State Police shows there has been a dramatic increase in the number of calls for accidents since the Washington Bridge closure.

<https://www.wpri.com/target-12/data-crash-calls-have-more-than-doubled-since-washington-bridge-closure/>

Salman Khan / BNN / February 29, 2024

### **Rhode Island's Washington Bridge Crisis: RIDOT Admits Miscommunication Amid Structural Concerns**

More than two weeks following a significant State House hearing, Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) Director Peter Alviti conceded to having provided incorrect information regarding the structural integrity of the Washington Bridge. This admission raises questions about the oversight and reporting on critical infrastructure in Rhode Island, spotlighting the bridge's unforeseen closure and its impact on local communities.

<https://bnnbreaking.com/politics/rhode-islands-washington-bridge-crisis-ridot-admits-miscommunication-amid-structural-concerns>

Brian Amaral / Boston Globe / February 29, 2024

### **Lawmakers want RIDOT to provide more information on Washington Bridge fix**

EAST PROVIDENCE — East Bay lawmakers have introduced legislation that would mandate monthly reports from the Rhode Island Department of Transportation about the Washington Bridge project, underscoring rising frustrations about the bridge closure. “Aside from the obvious stress and inconvenience that this bridge closure has caused for so many of our residents, the lack of clear information regarding this significant problem has been particularly frustrating for so many people,” state Representative Katherine Kazarian, an East Providence Democrat and the House majority whip, said in a news release. “Although the people of East Providence and Providence have been the most impacted by the closure of the Washington Bridge, residents across the East Bay and the state are also feeling the effects of this transportation disaster.

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/02/29/metro/washington-bridge-closure-lawmakers-want-ridot-to-provide-more-information/>

Eli Sherman / WPRI / February 29, 2024

### **New bill would require monthly public updates on Washington Bridge status**

EAST PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — East Bay lawmakers have filed legislation that would require the state’s transportation agency to publicly provide a monthly report detailing repair, traffic and cost updates associated with the ongoing Washington Bridge closure. The legislation filed Wednesday in the R.I. House of Representatives would mandate the R.I. Department of Transportation to provide the monthly “snap-shot” report to the General Assembly and to post it publicly online. It would include updates on all repairs, alterations and replacement efforts, along with crash data and any adjustments made to traffic patterns.

<https://www.wpri.com/target-12/new-bill-would-require-monthly-public-updates-on-washington-bridge-status/>

Melanie DaSilva / WPRI / February 26, 2024

### **RIDOT to begin work adding lanes on Washington Bridge**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — As drivers continue to deal with the closure of the westbound side of the Washington Bridge, the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) is working to ease congestion. Starting Monday, work will begin to add a third travel lane in both directions.

[RIDOT to begin work adding lanes on Washington Bridge | WPRI.com](https://www.wpri.com/news/ridot-to-begin-work-adding-lanes-on-washington-bridge/)

Christopher Boardman / ABC 6 / February 26, 2024

**Washington Bridge traffic pattern work to begin Monday**

EAST PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WLNE) — The Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) will begin designing and ordering needed materials before starting construction to move the bypass lanes in East Providence.

[Washington Bridge traffic pattern work to begin Monday | ABC6](#)

Gabrielle Caracciolo / WJAR / February 23, 2024

**New accounting adds up what's been spent on Washington Bridge closure**

Engineering, construction, police details, and more. The costs of the Washington Bridge closure continue to pile up. New numbers from the Rhode Island Department of Transportation show more than \$2 million has been paid for various Washington Bridge-related expenses so far.

[New accounting adds up what's been spent on Washington Bridge closure \(turnto10.com\)](#)

Brian Crandall / WJAR / February 23, 2024

**NBC 10 I-Team: Leaked Washington Bridge draft report explores possibility of collapse**

We've heard it's bad. But what are the chances the now-closed westbound Washington Bridge could fall down? The draft assessment from VN Engineering sent to Rhode Island Department of Transportation Wednesday and obtained by the I-Team states, "under sufficient load the bridge could fail with limited to no advanced warning" and due to the bridge's design that does not have redundant support systems, the failure of one beam could lead to the domino effect collapse of others.

[Leaked Washington Bridge report explores possibility of collapse \(turnto10.com\)](#)

GoLocalProv News Team / GoLocalProv / February 23, 2024

**Washington Bridge Report: Bridge Danger to Gano Street, Decay Has Gone on for Years and Not Detected**

The draft VN Engineers report on the Washington Bridge raises significant questions about the stability of the structure even while it is not in use and raises disturbing questions about the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) Bridge inspection program, as it cites the decay to the core of the bridge taking place over the years.

<https://www.golocalprov.com/news/Washington-Bridge-Report-Bridge-Danger-to-Gano-Street-Decay-Has-Gone-on-f>

NBC 10 News / WJAR / February 22, 2024

**NBC 10 I-Team: Draft report analyzes Washington Bridge, but makes no recommendation**

The NBC 10 I-Team obtained a 45-page draft report on the assessment of the westbound Washington Bridge. The Rhode Island Department of Transportation abruptly shut down the westbound side of the bridge on Dec. 11 over the discovery of a broken steel tie-down rod and concern that the bridge could fail.

<https://turnto10.com/news/washington-bridge-closure/draft-report-interstate-195-east-providence-rhode-island-department-of-transportation-repair-replacement-demolition-super-structure-traffic-february-22-2024>

Patrick Anderson and Mark Reynolds / Providence Journal / February 22, 2024

**Report on Washington Bridge casts doubt on long-term safety of repairing the westbound span**

An engineering firm studying the damaged westbound side of the Washington Bridge has found that repairs to the structure "have limited viability" and a full replacement of the span may be the only way to make it safe in the long term.

<https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/politics/state/2024/02/22/washington-bridge-report-says-full-replacement-needed-to-make-span-safe/72701694007/>

Eli Sherman, Ted Nesi & Tim White / WPRI / February 22, 2024

**Draft report: I-195 Washington Bridge needs major repairs or 'full bridge replacement'**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — A draft report on the fate of the Washington Bridge obtained by Target 12 warns Rhode Island officials they need to either make major repairs to the structure or replace it entirely. The 45-page report by Michael Murdock of VN Engineers Inc., dated Wednesday, urges the R.I. Department of Transportation to consider "the demolition and replacement of the superstructure, and potentially a full bridge replacement."

<https://www.wpri.com/target-12/draft-report-i-195-washington-bridge-needs-major-repairs-or-full-bridge-replacement/>

Christopher Boardman / ABC6 / February 22, 2024

**What's the timeline for the latest Washington Bridge construction?**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WLNE) — Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) Director Peter Alvit announced Wednesday that new traffic patterns would be coming to the Washington Bridge. These changes will be put in place to speed up commuter travel over the bridge that has been partially closed since December of 2023. RIDOT will be working with the Federal Highway Administration to alleviate congestion and lower the traffic times on Route-195.

<https://www.abc6.com/whats-the-timeline-for-the-latest-washington-bridge-construction/>

Ian Donniss / RIPR / February 22, 2024

**Fix for Washington Bridge headaches can't come soon enough in East Providence**

EP has been bearing the brunt of the emergency closing of the bridge in December. These side effects pose a potential setback for a city that has been on the rise, although state officials say they have a new fix. — Before everyone was talking about the Washington Bridge, the buzz in East Providence was about the Henderson Bridge. The new bridge opened last November, built to address previous structural deficiencies, and the redesign will ultimately leave some 25 acres of land for future development.

<https://thepublicradio.org/local/fix-for-washington-bridge-headaches-cant-come-soon-enough-in-east-providence/>

Brian Amaral / Boston Globe / February 21

## **New lanes to ease traffic over Rhode Island's Washington Bridge**

The state Department of Transportation will open new lanes of travel in both directions on the I-195 bridge in Providence. But it will take about eight weeks for the extra lanes to be up and running. Under the plans announced Wednesday, the temporary bypass lanes will get a 50 percent boost in capacity in both directions.

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/02/21/metro/ridot-lanes-traffic-rhode-island-washington-bridge-i-195/>

Chris Shea / RI Current / February 21

### **State will open extra travel lanes on the Washington Bridge. Like two months from now.**

Restriping will allow for three, narrower lanes in each direction; speed limit will be 40 mph. — Good news for commuters: The state plans to add an extra travel lane in each direction over the Washington Bridge on I-195. The catch: Lanes are going to be more narrow, and it will be at least eight weeks until the new traffic pattern opens up.

<https://rhodeislandcurrent.com/2024/02/21/state-will-open-extra-travel-lanes-on-the-washington-bridge-like-two-months-from-now/>

Melanie DaSilva & Shaun Towne / WPRI / February 21

### **RIDOT to add lanes on Washington Bridge in hopes of cutting travel times**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — In an effort to ease congestion caused by the closure of the westbound side of the Washington Bridge, the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) will be updating the traffic pattern over the next few months. RIDOT Director Peter Alviti and other state leaders held a news conference Wednesday to lay out their plans, which include adding a third travel lane in both directions.

<https://www.wpri.com/traffic/i-195-washington-bridge-closure/mckee-ridot-to-announce-new-traffic-pattern-for-washington-bridge/>

Patrick Anderson / Providence Journal / February 21, 2024

### **New travel lanes coming to Washington Bridge to alleviate traffic. What to know.**

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation has a plan to add an extra travel lane in each direction on the Interstate 195 Washington Bridge while the damaged westbound span is repaired. The extra lanes will come from narrowing the existing lanes on the span now shared by drivers in both directions, RIDOT director Peter Alviti Jr. said Wednesday at a State House news conference. Narrowing the lanes will involve construction and take an estimated eight weeks to complete. The new plan is intended improve travel time on I-195 and to alleviate congestion.

<https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/politics/2024/02/21/new-washington-bridge-i-195-traffic-pattern-coming-what-to-know/72682151007/>

NBC 10 NEWS / WJAR / February 21, 2024

### **Washington Bridge will be reconfigured for additional lanes**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WJAR) — The Rhode Island Department of Transportation said Wednesday that it will add one additional lane in each direction over the Washington

Bridge in hopes of easing congestion. The eastbound span has been carrying two lanes of traffic in both directions of Interstate 195 since mid-December. The bridge will be reconfigured for three lanes in each direction.

<https://turnto10.com/news/local/gov-dan-mckee-and-ridot-to-announce-new-traffic-pattern-for-washington-bridge-commuter-crisis-feb-21-2024#>

Gino DeAngelis / ABC6 / February 21

### **RIDOT opening new traffic lanes on Washington Bridge**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WLNE) — Gov. Dan McKee and Rhode Island Department of Transportation Director Peter Alвити announced that the state plans to have three lanes going each direction on the Washington Bridge. McKee said the aim of the extra lanes is to “cut back on travel delays and reduce congestion around the bridge,” and that a forensic analysis on the bridge is also being completed.

<https://www.abc6.com/ridot-opening-new-traffic-lanes-on-washington-bridge/>

Jimmy Bentley / Patch / February 21

### **Washington Bridge Getting Additional Travel Lanes: McKee, RIDOT**

Gov. Dan McKee says the added lanes will increase motor vehicle capacity by 50 percent and will make I-195 safer in both directions. — In an effort to reduce traffic congestion and travel times caused by the closure of the Washington Bridge's westbound side, the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) will adjust the temporary traffic patterns in East Providence and Providence to provide three lanes of travel in both directions on I-195.

<https://patch.com/rhode-island/eastprovidence/washington-bridge-getting-additional-travel-lanes-mckee-ridot>

Kathy Gregg & Patrick Anderson / Providence Journal / February 19

### **Political Scene: The campaign contributions of Washington Bridge contractors**

The "carmageddon" surrounding the beleaguered Washington Bridge has acquainted Rhode Islanders with names like AECOM, Cardi, Vanasse Hangen Brustlin and Barletta, the engineering and construction firms providing most of the ground troops fighting to keep the bridge standing. Ocean state politicians' campaign managers have been familiar with them for years. Like almost any industry that serves the government, the highway infrastructure sector provides steady if not spectacular donors to Rhode Island political campaigns.

<https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/politics/state/2024/02/19/political-scene-the-campaign-contributions-of-washington-bridge-contractors/72598658007/>

Kristin Burnell & Leah Crowley / WPRI / February 16

### **Providence officials urge RIDOT to repair damage to Gano and Angell Streets**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — Providence officials are urging the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) to help pay for damaged roads in the East Side. According to Providence Mayor Brett Smiley and the city council, the Washington Bridge-related detours have caused a lot of damage to Gano and Angell streets especially. Two weeks ago, the city

made emergency repairs to fix damage to the roads and a retaining wall at a construction site on Gano Street.

[https://www.wpri.com/news/local-news/providence/providence-officials-urge-ridot-to-repair-damage-to-gano-and-angell-streets/?utm\\_source=t.co&utm\\_medium=referral&utm\\_campaign=socialflow](https://www.wpri.com/news/local-news/providence/providence-officials-urge-ridot-to-repair-damage-to-gano-and-angell-streets/?utm_source=t.co&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=socialflow)

Ian Donniss / The Public's Radio / February 16, 2024

### **State Rep. June Speakman on Washington Bridge, the fight for affordable housing, and a political scientist's view on 2024**

Is Alvi the right person to lead the response to the crisis involving the Washington Bridge? And do state lawmakers have the technical expertise to run an effective Oversight process? I'm Ian Donniss and this week I'm going in depth with House Oversight Committee member state Representative June Speakman.

<https://thepublicsradio.org/political-roundtable/state-rep-june-speakman-on-washington-bridge-the-fight-for-affordable-housing-and-a-political-scientists-view-on-2024/>

Gabrielle Caracciolo / NBC 10 News / February 15, 2024

### **Commuter crisis hits week 10, Gov. McKee awaits bridge reports**

In week 10 of the Commuter Crisis, it's a waiting game as engineering reports on the bridge could be done soon. Governor Dan McKee said Thursday there's no hard deadline for the seven engineering firms currently working on the Washington Bridge to finish their reports and make recommendations to the state but he's hopeful to have some direction by the end of the month.

<https://turnto10.com/news/local/commuter-crisis-hits-week-10-gov-mckee-awaits-bridge-reports-southern-new-england-rhode-island-february-15-2024>

Patrick Anderson / Providence Journal / February 15, 2024

### **Top RI lawmakers tell business leaders Washington Bridge costs keep them up at night**

Rhode Island's top lawmakers Thursday said the state is in fiscal limbo over the failure of the westbound half of the Washington Bridge, with no idea how much repairs will cost or when the bill will come due.

<https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/politics/state/2024/02/15/at-providence-chamber-lunch-lawmakers-say-bridge-fixes-cost-haunts-them/72614243007/>

Brian Crandall / WJAR / February 14

### **'The problem was severe in July': Expert analyzes Washington Bridge for NBC 10 I-Team**

A crack seen months before the sudden closure of the westbound Washington Bridge should have been cause for concern, an engineering professor told the NBC 10 I-Team. Asked by the I-Team if a crack seen in a July inspection photo should have been a warning sign, Barzin Mobasher said, "I believe so."

<https://turnto10.com/i-team/washington-bridge-engineering-expert-analysis-interstate-195-east-providence-rhode-island-department-of-transportation-inspection-photo-warning-sign-february-14-2024>

Mark Reynolds and Patrick Anderson / Providence Journal / February 14, 2024

**Broken bridge parts and specks of blue paint. How long was bridge at risk before closure?**

PROVIDENCE – State transportation officials spotlighted the importance of broken tie-down rods when they closed the Washington Bridge's westbound lanes on Route 195 on Dec. 11, citing the potential for a catastrophe.

<https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/local/2024/02/14/how-long-was-washington-bridge-damaged-paint-flecks-might-provide-clues/72573242007/>

Amy Russo / Providence Journal / February 14

**Washington Bridge detour damaging Providence streets? One councilman thinks RI should pay up**

PROVIDENCE – City Councilman John Goncalves is calling on the state to do its part to fix streets damaged by traffic diverted from Washington Bridge as it undergoes repairs. In a resolution to be presented at Thursday night's council meeting, Goncalves argues the influx of cars jamming up local streets is putting at risk not only infrastructure but pedestrians and the motorists themselves.

<https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/local/2024/02/14/pvd-councilman-to-rid-of-fix-our-roads-damaged-by-washington-bridge-closure/72599624007/>

Ian Donniss / Johnston Sun Rise / February 14

**More and more questions on Washington Bridge**

STORY OF THE WEEK: During an address last week to the Northern RI Chamber of Commerce, Gov. Dan McKee suggested the worst traffic fallout from the Washington Bridge is in the past. "We have to be really honest about where we are if we want our businesses to do well," the governor said, per The Woonsocket Call. But I-195 once again resembled a parking lot for part of Thursday morning, due to an accident. Social media in RI lit up with howls of frustration. The sheer unpredictability of travel conditions, which vary day by day and hour by hour, is a central aspect of this crisis, and probably the most aggravating part for Rhode Islanders.

[https://www.johnstonsunrise.net/stories/more-and-more-questions-on-washington-bridge\\_241053](https://www.johnstonsunrise.net/stories/more-and-more-questions-on-washington-bridge_241053)

Wheeler Cowperthwaite / Providence Journal / February 13, 2024

**How was it crossing the Washington Bridge in the snowstorm? We made the trip.**

EAST PROVIDENCE – With several inches of snow projected to hit the Providence area through the duration of Tuesday's winter storm, the biggest pain point for traffic in the state, the Washington Bridge, remained relatively clear in both directions. There was almost no traffic on the bridge heading west or east late Tuesday morning, and there was no traffic

leading up to the bridge in East Providence, where quality of life has been impacted by drivers swarming side streets and cars trying to get onto Interstate 195 backing up for blocks.

<https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/local/2024/02/13/was-the-washington-bridge-plowed-on-tuesday-drive-was-smooth-sailing/72584018007/>

Christopher Boardman / ABC6 / February 13, 2024

**Alviti: Washington Bridge is ‘the one I’m truly sorry for’**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WLNE) — RIDOT Director Peter Alviti spent four hours taking questions about the Washington Bridge from lawmakers Monday. Alviti was joined at the joint oversight committee hearing by senior deputy chief of staff Joseph Almond, explaining that seven engineering firms are currently investigating how severe the damage to the bridge is.

<https://www.abc6.com/alviti-washington-bridge-is-the-one-im-truly-sorry-for/>

Ted Nesi / WPRI / February 12

**RIDOT’s Alviti apologizes for I-195 bridge closure, tells lawmakers answers are coming**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — R.I. Department of Transportation Director Peter Alviti apologized Monday for the disruption caused by the closure of the westbound Washington Bridge, but defended his overall track record under questioning by lawmakers. During a joint hearing of the House and Senate oversight panels that lasted nearly four hours, Alviti repeatedly said it was still too soon to say whether the bridge will need to be fully replaced, let alone how much that would cost. But he said RIDOT and its outside consultants are working “24/7” to get answers.

<https://www.wpri.com/traffic/i-195-washington-bridge-closure/ridots-alviti-apologizes-for-i-195-bridge-closure-tells-lawmakers-answers-are-coming/>

Molly Levine / WJAR / February 12

**Rhode Island lawmakers grill Alviti over Washington Bridge in joint oversight hearing**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WJAR) — The House and Senate Oversight Committees joined Monday night to discuss the Washington Bridge closure with Rhode Island Department of Transportation Director Peter Alviti. The three-and-a-half hour-long meeting began with an apology from the director.

<https://turnto10.com/news/local/oversight-committees-meet-to-discuss-washington-bridge-crisis>

Brian Amaral & Ed Fitzpatrick / Boston Globe / February 12

**Five takeaways about Washington Bridge closure after R.I. DOT director’s testimony**

PROVIDENCE — State lawmakers grilled Rhode Island Department of Transportation Director Peter Alviti Jr. and two other witnesses about the Washington Bridge westbound closure for nearly four hours on Monday. Alviti was joined by Joseph Almond, senior deputy chief of staff to Governor Daniel J. McKee, and Jeffrey Klein, who is the director of structural engineering at the firm VHB.

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/02/12/metro/5-takeaways-about-washington-bridge-closure-after-ri-dot-directors-testimony/>

Gabrielle Caracciolo & Molly Levine / WJAR / February 12

**Peter Alviti apologizes at joint oversight committee hearing into Washington Bridge**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WJAR) — Speaking Monday to a Joint House and Senate Oversight Committee hearing into the Washington Bridge closure, Rhode Island Department of Transportation Director Peter Alviti apologized and took full responsibility. Alviti said he is aware of the fallout from the bridge closure and that he welcomes the opportunity to address the committee. He said he's been transparent throughout the crisis.

<https://turnto10.com/news/washington-bridge-closure/joint-house-senate-committee-oversight-committee-rhode-island-department-of-transportation-state-house-responsibility-timeline-february-12-2024>

Ian Donnis / RIPR / February 12

**Lawmakers vent frustration over Washington Bridge**

The meeting at the Statehouse gave legislators an opportunity to share the frustration of constituents dealing with traffic congestion and longer commutes, even if the central question about the bridge crisis still remains unanswered for now. “How could this become so critical, so quickly?” asked state Rep. Julie Casimiro (D-North Kingstown), referring to how the bridge passed an inspection last summer and then was abruptly closed on an emergency basis in mid-December.

<https://thepublicsradio.org/article/lawmakers-vent-frustration-over-washington-bridge>

Kathy Gregg / Providence Journal / February 12, 2024

**How did we get here? Lawmakers get their turn to question RIDOT over Washington Bridge**

PROVIDENCE— Nearly two months after the abrupt closure of the westbound span of the Washington Bridge thrust the state into commuter chaos, Peter Alviti, the top man in the state's Department of Transportation, will face a legislative inquisition on Monday. According to the agenda for Monday's joint House-Senate oversight hearing, Rhode Island lawmakers want to know how the bridge's condition went undetected for so long and, now that we're here, what the state intends to do with the critically damaged Washington Bridge – fix it or replace it?

<https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/politics/state/2024/02/12/ridot-officials-face-inquisition-over-washington-bridge-closure/72570069007/>

Leah Crowley / WPRI / February 12

**Oversight committees to hear testimony in Washington Bridge closure**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — A joint meeting of the Rhode Island House and Senate oversight committees is scheduled to convene Monday afternoon to review the closure of the Washington Bridge. According to a press release, the committees are expected to hear testimony from Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) Director Peter Alviti.

<https://www.wpri.com/news/oversight-committees-to-hear-testimony-in-washington-bridge-closure/>

Staff Reporters / NECN / February 12, 2024

### **RI lawmakers to discuss Washington Bridge condition**

Rhode Island state lawmakers will meet on Monday to talk about the Washington Bridge crisis, according to NBC affiliate WJAR. House and Senate oversight committee members will discuss the closure of the westbound side of the bridge as well as the Department of Transportation's response and the next steps for the bridge.

<https://www.necn.com/news/local/ri-lawmakers-to-discuss-washington-bridge-condition/3160224/>

Geeta Pillai / Breaking News Network / February 12, 2024

### **Washington Bridge Crisis: Unraveling the Debacle and Seeking Accountability**

The Washington Bridge crisis takes center stage as RIDOT Director Peter Alviti and Governor Dan McKee's Senior Deputy Chief of Staff Joseph Almond testify before the joint oversight committee. The hearing aims to address the causes of the bridge's critical failure, explore its future, and seek transparency and accountability in public infrastructure management.

<https://bnnbreaking.com/breaking-news/washington-bridge-crisis-unraveling-the-debacle-and-seeking-accountability>

NBC 10 News / WJAR / February 11, 2024

### **Washington Bridge crisis coming under scrutiny at Statehouse**

PROVIDENCE, RI (WJAR) — State lawmakers plan to examine Rhode Island's troubled Washington Bridge on Monday. House and Senate Oversight Committee members are scheduled to meet jointly to discuss the matter.

<https://turnto10.com/news/local/washington-bridge-crisis-coming-under-scrutiny-at-statehouse-alviti-almond-oversight-vanasse-hangen-brustlin-mckee-serpa-mckenney>

Wheeler Cowperthwaite / Providence Journal / February 9, 2024

### **Has the Washington Bridge closure changed life in East Providence? What we found.**

EAST PROVIDENCE – Amalia Ross and her boyfriend used to live a 30-second drive from the on-ramp to Interstate 195 West near Warren Avenue. While their address hasn't changed, the time it takes to get into Providence or anywhere on the other side of the bridge has. Now, a 30-second drive is at least a 20-minute ordeal since the shutdown of the westbound span of the Washington Bridge.

<https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/local/2024/02/09/washington-bridge-traffic-has-some-thinking-about-moving-from-east-providence/72496036007/>

GoLocalProv News Team / GoLocalProv / February 9, 2024

### **Federal Investigation Expands on Washington Bridge**

GoLocal has learned that multiple contractors and engineering firms who have worked on the Washington Bridge since 2015 have received demand letters for all information and communications relating to the bridge from the U.S. Department of Justice (USDOJ).

Contractors, including Barletta Heavy Division and Cardi Corporation, have received demand letters. As many as a dozen firms may be part of the investigation.

<https://www.golocalprov.com/news/new-federal-investigation-expands-on-washington-bridge>

Gabrielle Caracciolo / NBC / February 9, 2024

### **Department of Transportation launches Washington Bridge travel time tools**

(WJAR) — Rhode Island Department of Transportation announced the launch of a new tools that claim to help drivers navigate the Washington Bridge closure. A new travel time dashboard shows "current travel times" which is updated every five minutes. Residents can chose from 12 different routes.

<https://turnto10.com/news/washington-bridge-closure/departement-of-transportation-launch-travel-time-charts-rhode-island-east-providence-routes-tool-dashboard-february-9-2024>

Madison Crowley / ABC 6 / February 9

### **RIDOT announces new travel time tools for Washington Bridge**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WLNE) — The Rhode Island Department of Transportation announced today that they created Washington Bridge travel time charts. These charts will show the change in travel times on different days and hours of the day on nine different routes.

<https://www.abc6.com/ridot-announces-new-travel-time-tools-for-washington-bridge/>

Sarah Doiron / WPRI / February 8, 2024

### **Washington Bridge oversight hearing slated for next week**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — The stage is set for a joint hearing where state lawmakers plan to grill Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) Director Peter Alviti about the ongoing Washington Bridge debacle. Alviti will field questions from the R.I. House and Senate's respective oversight committees on Monday, Feb. 12, at 3 p.m. He will be joined by Joseph Almond, Gov. Dan McKee's senior deputy chief of staff, and VHB Engineering Director Jeffrey Klein.

<https://www.wpri.com/traffic/i-195-washington-bridge-closure/washington-bridge-oversight-hearing-slated-for-next-week/>

Kaitlin Gehlhaus / ABC 6 / February 8, 2024

### **Residents not confident with state leadership amid Washington Bridge closure**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WLNE) — Rhode Islanders said they are worried about state leadership when it comes to handling the Washington Bridge's partial closure. Federal officials came from Washington D.C. to see the Washington Bridge for themselves and say the fix could take a year or two to complete if they have to rebuild. This week engineers and planners are analyzing traffic patterns and trying to figure out the most effective way to set up the area in the meantime.

<https://www.abc6.com/residents-not-confident-with-state-leadership-amid-washington-bridge-closure/>

GABRIELLE CARACCIOL / WJAR / February 8, 2024

### **Rhode Island lawmakers prepare for oversight hearings on Washington Bridge closure**

Rhode Island Department of Transportation Director Peter Alviti is among those who will answer questions Monday from the joint House and Senate oversight hearing into the Washington Bridge closure. Scheduled to start at 3 p.m., Alviti will appear alongside Joseph Almond, Gov. Dan McKee's senior deputy chief of staff who's been assigned to help with the state's response, and Jeffery Klein, the director of structural engineering at VHB.

<https://turnto10.com/news/washington-bridge-closure/rhode-island-lawmakers-prepare-house-senate-oversight-hearings-interstate-195-east-providence-february-8-2024>

Alyssa Azzara / ABC 6 / February 8, 2024

### **East Providence mayor rejects idea of emergency declaration for Washington Bridge**

EAST PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WLNE) — East Providence City Council is calling on Governor Dan McKee to sign an emergency declaration for the city, but Mayor Bob DaSilva says it's not that simple. During Tuesday night's city council meeting, councilors discussed their fears of potential long-term consequences from the Washington Bridge westbound closure and called for a state of emergency to help East Providence.

<https://www.abc6.com/east-providence-mayor-says-state-of-emergency-would-not-benefit-city-amid-washington-bridge-crisis/>

Brian Amaral / Boston Globe / February 8

### **McKee says he encouraged RIDOT's Alviti to meet with aggrieved workers**

PROVIDENCE — Governor Dan McKee said Thursday that he wants Department of Transportation Director Peter Alviti to meet with union employees who reported that Alviti had fostered a toxic workplace culture. McKee's comments came the day after a Boston Globe report quoted the leaders of International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers Local 400 describing RIDOT's atmosphere as rife with bullying and fears of retaliation.

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/02/08/metro/mckee-said-he-encouraged-ridots-alviti-meet-with-aggrieved-workers/>

Kathy Gregg / Providence Journal / February 6, 2024

### **RIDOT required employees connected to Washington Bridge contracts to sign NDAs.**

#### **Why?**

For the period of time spanning a legal fight over who would get the last big Washington Bridge construction contract, the Rhode Island Department of Transportation required its employees to sign non-disclosure agreements, also known as NDAs. Employees involved in the review and scoring of bids, as well as recommendations on which companies should win which contracts, were required to sign a "confidentiality agreement" that said, in part: "All documents and information relating to vendor proposals (content, budget, approach to problems, staffing) are to be kept in the strictest confidence."

<https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/politics/state/2024/02/06/ridot-employees-connected-to-washington-bridge-contracts-signed-ndas/72480108007/>

Alyssa Azzara / ABC6 / February 6, 2024

### **\$860,000 spent so far on Washington Bridge assessment, repairs**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WLNE) — Changes to the traffic pattern on I-195 West got their first real test on Monday, as a federal official checked out the Washington Bridge for himself. In a visit to Providence, Highway Administrator Shailen Bhatt said experts will be coming to Rhode Island this week to analyze the Washington Bridge situation. According to Bhatt, they'll be focusing on two topics: how the bridge has gotten to this point and how they can get it fixed as soon as possible.

<https://www.abc6.com/highway-administrator-speaks-on-washington-bridge-as-costs-rise/>

Ian Donniss / RIPR / February 6, 2024

### **Potential rebuild of key R.I. bridge could take two years, federal official says**

The head of the Federal Highway Administration toured the area around the Washington Bridge on Monday, underscoring how the westbound position of the bridge may need to be replaced. "The reason I came up here today is because of the transition from a repair to a potential replacement," FHWA Administrator Shailen Bhatt told reporters after visiting the site.

<https://www.wbur.org/news/2024/02/06/washington-bridge-rhode-island-repair-demolish-rebuild>

Wimberly Patton / CDLLIFE / February 6, 2024

### **Washington Bridge closure causing Providence to "fall apart" as semi trucks cut through city**

The Mayor of Providence says that the city's roads are "falling apart" as tractor trailers cut through the city due to the Washington Bridge closure. The westbound side of the Washington Bridge in Rhode Island was suddenly shut down back in December due to a "critical failure" of several original bridge components. As the closure continues, traffic from Interstate 195 westbound is being detoured through East Providence, to the Henderson Bridge, then through Providence and back to the interstate. Now, months later, the city is still seeing tractor trailers cutting through the city at a rate that the streets were not designed to withstand.

<https://cdllife.com/2024/washington-bridge-closure-causing-providence-to-fall-apart-as-semi-trucks-cut-through-city/>

Brian Amaral & Steph Machado / Boston Globe / February 5, 2024

### **Replacing R.I.'s Washington Bridge could take 1 to 2 years, federal official says**

The new timeframe is significantly longer than the original estimate of three months to repair the major I-195 bridge when it abruptly closed in December. That would represent a significantly longer timeframe than the original estimate of three months to repair the major highway bridge when it abruptly closed in December 2023. In the meantime, the mayor of Providence said tractor-trailers are causing damage to roads, prompting him to ask them to stop detouring through the city.

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/02/05/metro/washington-bridge-closure-replacement-could-take-1-to-2-years/>

Chris Shea / RI Current / February 5

### **Uncertainty surrounds timeline to remedy problems with Washington Bridge**

PROVIDENCE — Replacing the westbound side of the Washington Bridge on I-195 could take two years to complete, Federal Highway Administrator Shailen Bhatt said Monday after touring parts of the bridge with state and local officials and congressional delegates. “It’s a very complicated structure,” Bhatt said at a press conference on the Gano Street off-ramp, a point he repeated a few times.

<https://www.newsfromthestates.com/article/uncertainty-surrounds-timeline-remedy-problems-washington-bridge>

NBC 10 News / WJAR / February 5, 2024

### **Federal Highway Administrator tours Washington Bridge as RIDOT tries new traffic pattern**

(WJAR) — Federal Highway Administrator Shailen Bhatt visited Rhode Island on Monday to tour the closed Washington Bridge along with Gov. Dan McKee and other local and state officials. “My message to the people of Rhode Island is, whether it’s federal, state, or local resources, we’ve got everybody aligned here to get this bridge repaired or replaced as quickly as possible,” Bhatt said. “I’ve seen the pictures. I’ve looked at the damage up there. And as I said, what we want to do now is transition to getting it back open as quickly as possible.”

<https://turnto10.com/news/local/federal-highway-administrator-shailen-bhatt-to-tour-washington-bridge-as-ridot-tries-new-traffic-pattern-feb-5-2024>

Ian Donnis / RIPR / February 5, 2024

### **Federal Highway Administrator tours ailing Washington Bridge**

The head of the Federal Highway Administration toured the area around the Washington Bridge on Monday, underscoring how the westbound position of the bridge may need to be replaced. “The reason I came up here today is because of the transition from a repair to a potential replacement,” FHWA Administrator Shailene Bhatt told reporters after visiting the site. A decision on whether to repair or replace the bridge along I-195 West is expected after additional engineering details become available, a development expected in the next few weeks.

<https://thepublicsradio.org/article/federal-highway-administrator-tours-ailing-washington-bridge>

Kaitlin Gelhaus / ABC6 / February 5

### **Highway Administrator visits Washington Bridge, says rebuild is a possibility**

EAST PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WLNE) — United States Highway Administrator Shailen Bhatt joined Rhode Island state officials Monday to discuss the future of the Washington Bridge. Bhatt gave his thoughts on whether workers can continue repairs on the bridge or if it will have to

be torn down and replaced. “The reason I came up here today is because of the transition of a potential repair to a potential replacement,” Bhatt said.

<https://www.abc6.com/highway-administrator-visits-washington-bridge-says-rebuild-is-a-possibility/>

Patrick Anderson / Providence Journal / February 5, 2024

### **Federal highway official, McKee to give update on Washington Bridge**

The head of the Federal Highway Administration is coming to visit Rhode Island's ailing Washington Bridge Monday to talk about what is being done to fix it. Federal Highway Administrator Shailen Bhatt is set to join Gov. Dan McKee, Rhode Island's congressional delegation, Providence Mayor Brett Smiley and East Providence Mayor Bob DaSilva for a news conference on the Providence side of the bridge before noon.

[https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/state/2024/02/05/washington-bridge-updates-federal-highway-officials-in-rhode-island/72479065007/?utm\\_campaign=snd-autopilot](https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/state/2024/02/05/washington-bridge-updates-federal-highway-officials-in-rhode-island/72479065007/?utm_campaign=snd-autopilot)

Christopher Boardman / ABC6 / February 5, 2024

### **U.S. Highway Administrator to be briefed on Washington Bridge Monday**

EAST PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WLNE) — The ongoing commuter crisis on the Washington Bridge has prompted a meeting between federal and state officials Monday. Nearly two months into the westbound closure of the bridge, U.S. Highway Administrator Shailen Bhatt will be in Rhode Island to meet with Governor Dan McKee and other officials to be briefed on the situation. ABC6 Reporter Yanni Tragellis has more. [Introduces video]

<https://www.abc6.com/u-s-highway-administrator-to-be-briefed-on-washington-bridge-monday/>

Melanie DaSilva / WPRI / February 5, 2024

### **Federal Highway Administrator to tour Washington Bridge**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — Federal Highway Administrator Shailen Bhatt is visiting Rhode Island on Monday to tour the Washington Bridge while local officials test a new traffic pattern aimed at alleviating congestion. It's the first weekday commute after the R.I. Department of Transportation (RIDOT) reduced the number of lanes on I-195 West from three to two near the East Shore Expressway entrance in East Providence.

[https://www.wpri.com/traffic/i-195-washington-bridge-closure/federal-highway-administrator-to-tour-washington-bridge/?utm\\_source=t.co&utm\\_medium=referral&utm\\_campaign=socialflow](https://www.wpri.com/traffic/i-195-washington-bridge-closure/federal-highway-administrator-to-tour-washington-bridge/?utm_source=t.co&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=socialflow)

GoLocalProv News Team / February 4

### **Head of Federal Highway Is Visiting RI - He Previously Worked for Washington Bridge Contractor**

Federal Highway Administrator (FHWA) Shailen Bhatt is scheduled to tour the Washington Bridge on Monday along with Governor Dan McKee, RI Department of Transportation Director Peter Alвити, members of the Congressional delegation, and other officials. According to previous statements by the McKee administration, the FHWA is conducting an

"investigation" into the Washington Bridge failure. That investigation is separate from the U.S. Department of Justice investigation unveiled ten days ago. Just 13 months ago, directly prior to his federal appointment, Bhatt served as a top executive for AECOM.

<https://www.golocalprov.com/news/head-of-federal-highway-is-visiting-ri-he-previously-worked-for-washington>

Staff Reports / NECN / February 2

### **RI leaders say they weren't notified about Washington Bridge issues for days**

Rhode Island leaders, including Gov. Dan McKee, said they weren't aware of the structural issues surrounding the Washington Bridge for days, according to NBC affiliate WJAR. Broken rods were discovered last month within the bridge, which carries Interstate 195 over the Seekonk River from Providence to East Providence and serves as a key gateway to Rhode Island's largest city. The Department of Transportation received an email about this issue on Dec. 8 but director Peter Alviti said he wasn't notified for three days.

<https://www.necn.com/news/local/ri-leaders-say-they-werent-notified-about-washington-bridge-issues-for-days/3152130/>

Providence Journal Staff / Providence Journal / February 2

### **The Journal fought for these Washington Bridge emails. Now you can read them.**

While questions still remain around the closure of the westbound lanes of Interstate 195 on the Washington Bridge, including who knew what and when, as well as what discussion led to the actual closure of the bridge, some light was shed on how it all came together through an Access to Public Records Act request submitted by The Providence Journal and delivered on Jan. 30. The 236 emails released by the Rhode Island Department of Transportation cover from Dec. 8 to Dec. 13, from the first email sent by a concerned engineer with VHB alerting a potential problem, following through the closing of the bridge on Dec. 11 and several days after. They include communications within RIDOT, between RIDOT and the firms working on the bridge, and between RIDOT and Governor Dan McKee's office.

<https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/politics/2024/02/02/washington-bridge-closure-emails-read-what-the-providence-journal-obtained/72449846007/>

Melanie DaSilva / WPRI / February 2, 2024

### **RIDOT testing new traffic pattern on I-195 West**

EAST PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — In hopes of alleviating congestion leading up to the Washington Bridge, the R.I. Department of Transportation (RIDOT) will be testing new traffic patterns in the coming months. Starting at 10 p.m. Friday, RIDOT will reduce the number of lanes on I-195 West from three to two near the East Shore Expressway entrance in East Providence.

[https://www.wpri.com/traffic/i-195-washington-bridge-closure/ridot-testing-new-traffic-pattern-on-i-195-west/?utm\\_medium=referral&utm\\_campaign=socialflow&utm\\_source=t.co](https://www.wpri.com/traffic/i-195-washington-bridge-closure/ridot-testing-new-traffic-pattern-on-i-195-west/?utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=socialflow&utm_source=t.co)

Brian Amaral, Steph Machado & Ed Fitzpatrick / Boston Globe / February 2, 2024

### **RIDOT will hold public meetings about Washington Bridge closure, legislators say**

PROVIDENCE — The Rhode Island Department of Transportation has agreed to hold public meetings about the Washington Bridge westbound closure, according to multiple state legislators who were briefed by the department Friday. The meetings, the lawmakers say, are set to take place after the Department of Transportation gets reports back on how to resolve the bridge closure. RIDOT has previously said that's expected to happen in late February or early March.

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/02/02/metro/washington-bridge-closure-ridot-will-hold-public-meetings-legislators-say/?event=event25>

Jacquelyn Voghel / PBN / February 2, 2024

### **Rush hour, traffic anxieties continue to hurt small businesses amid Washington Bridge closure**

PROVIDENCE – Over the past few years, resilience has been a common theme – and a necessity – for many of Rhode Island's small businesses, such as Opt Eyewear Boutique in Wayland Square. "We survived COVID. We had to move entirely, and we survived an entire buildout," said owner Jessica Leach, who took out a loan from the U.S. Small Business Administration to weather the COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://pbn.com/rush-hour-traffic-anxieties-continue-to-hurt-small-businesses-amid-washington-bridge-closure/>

Kathy Gregg / Providence Journal / February 1

### **Questions remain about Washington Bridge closure after email release. What we want to know.**

PROVIDENCE – Did anybody at the highest ranks of state government communicate between the Friday that an alarmed engineer emailed about potentially catastrophic defects in the Washington Bridge and the Monday the bridge was abruptly closed? As improbable as it might seem, there is no evidence they did in the 236 pages of emails the Rhode Island Department of Transportation gave The Journal in response to an Access to Public Records request filed on Dec. 15.

<https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/politics/state/2024/02/01/emails-leave-major-gaps-in-what-led-to-washington-bridge-closure-decision/72435760007/>

Ted Nesi & Tim White / WPRI / February 1

### **McKee orders refunds after RIDOT charges news outlets for bridge docs**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — Gov. Dan McKee on Thursday ordered the R.I. Department of Transportation to refund Rhode Island news outlets hundreds of dollars it charged them to obtain public records related to the abrupt closure of the Washington Bridge. "After reviewing complaints about inconsistent charging for APRA requests in this specific case, the governor has directed RIDOT to refund those outlets that were charged differing amounts for similar document requests this week," RIDOT spokesperson Charles St. Martin said in a statement.

<https://www.wpri.com/target-12/mckee-forces-ridot-to-refund-news-outlets-after-charging-for-bridge-docs/>

Cailin Loesch / Patch / February 1

### **Emails Suggest Washington Bridge Failure Previously Existed: Report**

The flaw that caused the Washington Bridge to suffer a "critical failure" might have previously existed, according to internal Rhode Island Department of Transportation emails that were obtained by The Boston Globe. On Dec. 8, one week before the bridge was abruptly closed down, an engineer with a private firm working on its repairs sent a series of photos and notes explaining that multiple rods that were part of the bridge's original construction were fully exposed and failing, the outlet reported, citing the emails.

<https://patch.com/rhode-island/across-ri/emails-suggest-washington-bridge-failure-previous-existed-report>

Gabrielle Caracciolo / WJAR / February 1

### **McKee says it shouldn't have taken 72 hours to notify him of Washington Bridge issues**

EAST PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WJAR) — Gov. Dan McKee said he wasn't told about any issues with the Washington Bridge until more than 72 hours after they were discovered. "As soon as somebody knew, I should have known," McKee said.

<https://turnto10.com/news/washington-bridge-closure/alviti-says-he-wasnt-immediately-notified-about-critical-finding-of-washington-bridge>

Antonia Noori Farzan / Providence Journal / February 1

### **Who was the 'young engineer' who discovered Washington Bridge failure? What we know.**

The "young engineer" who spotted critical issues with the Washington Bridge stands to become a local hero – except that we still don't know who he is. Thanks to newly released records, however, we know that it was Andrew Prezioso, a structural engineer working for bridge-design contractor VHB, who presented the alarming findings to the Rhode Island Department of Transportation on Friday, Dec. 8.

<https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/local/2024/02/01/young-engineer-who-saw-washington-bridge-dangers-remains-a-mystery/72421227007/>

Wheeler Cowperthwaite / Providence Journal / February 1, 2024

### **When is the best time to drive over the Washington Bridge? Here's your guide.**

EAST PROVIDENCE – When the westbound portion of the Washington Bridge closed, traffic and the disruption to business was so bad that the federal government called it a disaster. How long the bridge will be closed is still unknown as the federal government opens an investigation.

<https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/local/2024/02/01/when-is-the-best-time-to-travel-over-the-washington-bridge/72410095007/>

Allegra Zamore / WJAR / February 1, 2024

### **Department of Transportation emails show timeline of Washington Bridge Closure**

NBC 10 is uncovering more details about the days leading up to the Washington Bridge closure. Hundreds of newly released RIDOT emails are showing the critical failures that shut the bridge down could have happened earlier than they were discovered. No emails from RIDOT Director Peter Alviti or Dan McKee were released yet but emails from other department leaders are helping shed light on what led to the shutdown.

<https://turnto10.com/news/local/department-of-transportation-emails-show-timeline-of-washington-bridge-closure-rhode-island-alviti-mckee>

Patrick Anderson / Providence Journal / February 1, 2024

### **Timeline of the Washington Bridge closure: Here's how it all happened**

If you've tried to get in and out of the East Bay the past two months, you've probably noticed – while in traffic – there's a problem with the westbound span of the Washington Bridge, which takes Interstate 195 over the Seekonk River. Understanding what went wrong with the bridge is challenging – the state has an army of engineers and consultants working on that now. How did it happen? And how has it played out? Here's a timeline:

[https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/politics/state/2024/02/01/washington-bridge-closure-timeline-how-it-all-happened/72423248007/?utm\\_campaign=snd-autopilot](https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/politics/state/2024/02/01/washington-bridge-closure-timeline-how-it-all-happened/72423248007/?utm_campaign=snd-autopilot)

Gene Valicenti / WPRO / February 1, 2024

### **Ask the DOT 2-1-2024**

Valicenti interviewed RIDOT chief Peter Alviti regarding the Washington Bridge issue. The interview was somewhat hard hitting with Alviti answering some hard questions.

<https://omny.fm/shows/the-news-with-gene-valicenti/ask-the-dot-2-1-24>

## **JANUARY 2024**

Staff Reports / NECN / January 31

### **Still no price tag on the future of the Washington Bridge**

A decision on the future of the Washington Bridge in Providence, Rhode Island, could take months, and now lawmakers have one question when it comes to the solution of the bridge: Where is this money coming from? The cost of the whole Washington Bridge project, including the closure, repairs or replacements, is still unknown and depends on the investigation's assessment of the damages. Oversight hearings are expected to begin next month.

<https://www.necn.com/news/local/still-no-price-tag-on-the-future-of-the-washington-bridge/3149882/>

Eli Sherman & Shiina LoSciuto / WPRI / January 31, 2024

### **'Hard questions': Lawmakers prep oversight hearing on I-195 Washington Bridge closure**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — The General Assembly's oversight panels are eyeing Feb. 12 for a joint hearing where lawmakers plan to question McKee administration officials about the Washington Bridge debacle. House Oversight Committee Chairwoman Patricia Serpa

disclosed the Feb. 12 date on Wednesday, and a Senate spokesperson added that while not all parties have confirmed yet, the bridge hearing is likely to happen that day.

<https://www.wpri.com/traffic/i-195-washington-bridge-closure/hard-questions-lawmakers-prep-oversight-hearing-on-i-195-washington-bridge-closure/>

Christopher Boardman / ABC6 / January 31, 2024

### **East Providence mayor dismisses idea of emergency declaration for Washington Bridge**

EAST PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WLNE) — One East Providence official wants a state of emergency declared over the Washington Bridge repairs. (Video Intro)

<https://www.abc6.com/east-providence-mayor-dismisses-idea-of-emergency-declaration-for-washington-bridge/>

Allegra Zamore / WJAR / January 31, 2024

### **Department of Transportation emails reveal new details of Washington Bridge closure**

Emails that have been made public provide new details about what preceded the closure of the westbound span of the Washington Bridge. State lawmakers are starting to ask questions about where money has gone in the past and now internal emails from the Rhode Island Department of Transportation show officials were briefed about possible deficiencies several days before the closure.

<https://turnto10.com/news/washington-bridge-closure/westbound-span-interstate-195-east-providence-rhode-island-department-of-transportation-internal-emails-trucks-left-lane-restriction-engineers-costs-january-31-2024>

Kathy Gregg & Patrick Anderson / Providence Journal / January 30

### **Emails show initial warning, response to Washington Bridge damage**

An early warning that something was seriously wrong with the Washington Bridge arrived in state Department of Transportation inboxes around 1:40 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 8, with the subject line: "Washington Bridge 700 Inspection – Critical Finding." Andrew Prezioso, a structural engineer working for bridge design contractor VHB, had seen alarming damage to the anchor rods holding down parts of the bridge's westbound span, and he wanted to share video of it, taken at 10:18 that morning.

<https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/state/2024/01/30/emails-show-initial-warning-response-to-washington-bridge-damage/72414203007/>

Gabrielle Carocciolo / WJAR / January 30

### **House speaker: 'We just don't know the cost' of Washington Bridge closure**

EAST PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WJAR) — With no decision on the Washington Bridge's future expected for at least another month, there's no price tag for how much the closure will cost but that question is top of mind for Rhode Island lawmakers. "Where's the money going to come from? One hundred percent legitimate question. Where's the money going to come from?" House Minority Leader Michael Chippendale said. "This isn't a simple matter of changing a couple of projects around and getting the asphalt laid down on district highway

with potholes. This is the potential rebuilding an entire bridge that cuts half of our state off from the other half."

<https://turnto10.com/news/washington-bridge-closure/westbound-span-cost-estimate-rhode-island-department-of-transportation-house-senate-general-assembly-oversight-interstate-195-january-30-2024>

Eli Sherman, Ted Nesi & Tim White / WPRI / January 30

### **RIDOT emails: Broken rods on Washington Bridge 'more exposed' due to construction**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — Engineers at the R.I. Department of Transportation privately acknowledged the section of the Washington Bridge that triggered its sudden closure had been hard to see until construction work made it "noticeable," according to internal emails newly obtained by Target 12. On Tuesday, RIDOT sent Target 12 more than 200 pages of documents in response to a request under Rhode Island's Access to Public Records Act. RIDOT required a \$300 payment from Target 12 in exchange for the documents, citing a provision in state law that allows agencies to charge for records requests.

<https://www.wpri.com/traffic/i-195-washington-bridge-closure/ridot-emails-broken-rods-on-washington-bridge-more-exposed-due-to-construction/>

Steph Machado & Brian Amaral / Boston Globe / January 30

### **Internal emails shed light on R.I.'s response to critical failure of Washington Bridge**

A RIDOT engineer said the bridge failure may have happened earlier than its discovery in December, and was exposed by recent construction. Internal emails released by the R.I. Department of Transportation on Tuesday shed new light on the discovery of a critical failure that shut down the heavily-traveled Washington Bridge on Interstate 195 westbound in December, including an observation that recent construction may have "exposed" broken rods underneath the bridge.

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/01/30/metro/internal-emails-shed-light-ris-response-critical-failure-washington-bridge/>

Allegra Zamore / WJAR / January 30

### **East Providence works to manage traffic congestion caused by Washington Bridge closure**

EAST PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WJAR) — The closure of the westbound Washington Bridge has created a nightmare for drivers trying to get around East Providence. Crews from the Rhode Island Department of Transportation and East Providence police were stationed at Orchard Street, Freeborn Avenue and a portion of Hull Street in the city on Tuesday morning.

<https://turnto10.com/news/washington-bridge-closure/east-providence-rhode-island-department-of-transportation-police-interstate-195-congestion-gridlock-roads-blocked-january-30-2024>

GoLocalProv / January 30

### **Federal Investigator on RIDOT Washington Bridge Failure Also Investigated 6/10 Contamination**

GoLocal has learned that the lead investigator from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Office of Inspector General (OIG), who is driving the investigation into the RIDOT Washington Bridge failure, has previously investigated another Director Peter Alvit-led RIDOT project. The investigator is USDOT's Special Agent Todd Collins, who was one of the investigators into the 6/10 contamination in the Olneyville section of Providence — one of the poorest sections of Rhode Island.

<https://www.golocalprov.com/news/federal-investigator-on-ridot-washington-bridge-failure-also-investigated-6>

Alyssa Azzara / ABC6 / January 30

### **East Providence feeling the effects as Washington Bridge shutdown hits 50-day mark**

Tuesday marks 50 agonizing days since the Washington Bridge shutdown, as the city of East Providence continues to get hit hard by traffic. East Providence Mayor Bob DaSilva says since Dec. 11, 2023, they've been reassessing the situation and trying to make changes when necessary to handle congestion in the city. One example of those changes is having certain roads be accessible by residents only.

<https://www.abc6.com/east-providence-feeling-the-effects-as-washington-bridge-shutdown-hits-50-day-mark/>

Christopher Boardman / ABC6 / January 30, 2024

### **50 days into the Washington Bridge repairs, how have drivers been coping?**

EAST PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WLNE) — We're now 50 days into the repairs to the westbound side of the Washington Bridge; how have residents and commuters been dealing with the changes? Some road closures have led to some relief in traffic back ups, but that wasn't always the case. Residents describe a "parking lot" in some areas as commuters have tried to find a way around the traffic. [Introduces video]

<https://www.abc6.com/50-days-into-the-washington-bridge-repairs-how-have-drivers-been-coping/>

GoLocalProv / January 29

### **McKee's Office Refuses to Answer Questions About Alvit's Status on Washington Bridge Failure**

Governor Dan McKee announced on Monday morning that he is sending a staffer over to the Rhode Island Department of Transportation to provide oversight "for all operations related to the Washington Bridge." "Today, we are announcing that the Governor has dispatched Senior Deputy Chief of Staff Joseph Almond to RIDOT and charged him with providing oversight and cross-agency coordination for all operations related to the Washington Bridge. Joe has a background in both municipal leadership and public safety that will position him well for this role," said McKee's Olivia DaRocha Press Secretary.

<https://www.golocalprov.com/news/mckees-office-refuses-to-answer-questions-about-alvitis-status-on-washington-bridge-failure>

Chris Allen / PBN / January 29, 2024

### **McKee sends top aide to ‘oversee’ RIDOT’s Washington Bridge response**

PROVIDENCE – Gov. Daniel J. McKee on Monday announced he has tapped a senior aide to oversee the R.I. Department of Transportation’s response to the failure of the Washington Bridge – adding to speculation that the administration’s support for RIDOT Director Peter Alviti Jr. may be eroding. In an emailed statement, McKee spokesperson Olivia DaRocha said the administration has “dispatched” Senior Deputy Chief of Staff Joseph Almond “and charged him with providing oversight and cross-agency coordination for all operations related to the Washington Bridge.”

<https://pbn.com/mckee-sends-top-aide-to-oversee-ridots-washington-bridge-response/>

### **Alex Torres-Perez / WPRI / January 29, 2024**

Governor Dan McKee previously told me he couldn’t declare an emergency since the bridge did not collapse.

<https://x.com/alextpnews/status/1752025157051330916?s=20>

### **Anita Baffoni / WPRI / January 29**

When pressed about the timing of when the feds involvement was disclosed, @GovDanMcKee today doubled down saying "we made a very prompt notification to the media." Reminder: it took more than 7 hours to disclose it to reporters. @wpri12

<https://x.com/AnitaBaffoni/status/1752024045904592989?s=20>

### **Gabrielle Caracciolo / WJAR / January 29, 2024**

Via twitter: After an RIDOT press event this morning, members of the media were asked to step outside for questions with the Governor. While that was happening, Director Peter Alviti tried to leave without answering questions. [features video]

<https://x.com/GabCaracciolo/status/1752021208256659922?s=20>

**More:** NBC 10's @GabCaracciolo asked @RIDOTNews Director Peter Alviti for his reaction to the federal investigation into the Washington Bridge closure. [video]

<https://x.com/NBC10/status/1752019651855290387?s=20>

**More:** NBC10 @GabCaracciolo asks @GovDanMcKee about a several-hour gap between when his administration was notified about a DOJ investigation into the Washington Bridge closure and when the public was told. [features video]

<https://x.com/NBC10/status/1752018852823642395?s=20>

### **Kathy Gregg / Providence Journal / January 29**

Via Twitter: How one reader interprets the RI DOT reports online:

<https://x.com/kathyprojo/status/1751971613497516448?s=20>

\*Note: [links to detailed & damning Ken Block post]

**More:** Per his spox: @GovDanMcKee has not lost confidence in RIDOT Director Peter Alviti. He is still the "subject matter expert." BUT Alviti will "be running everything related to the bridge through Joe Almond to make sure we are all on the same page." [links article]

<https://x.com/kathyprojo/status/1752016255156883627?s=20>

Article:

<https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/politics/2024/01/29/washington-bridge-fiasco-mckee-sends-top-aide-to-oversee-investigation-ridot/72393662007/>

**More:** 5 p.m. December 11. When was @GovDanMcKee told? And other sore points leading up to today's announcement that McKee is sending a top aide into RIDOT. Director Alviti will "be running everything related to the bridge through Joe Almond to make sure we are all on the same page."

<https://x.com/kathyprojo/status/1752019713851334752?s=20>

### **Bill Bartholomew / Podcast / January 29, 2024**

NEW: The Washington Bridge crisis goes up several notches: [links podcast]

<https://x.com/BillBartholomew/status/1752005865710727627?s=20>

Kathy Gregg / Providence Journal / January 29

### **McKee sends top aide to RIDOT to monitor response to Washington Bridge investigation.**

#### **What to know.**

PROVIDENCE – Gov. Dan McKee is sending a retired police lieutenant and key member of his State House team across the street from the capitol to monitor the Department of Transportation's response to the Washington Bridge fiasco and a federal investigation.

McKee is dispatching his Senior Deputy Chief of Staff Joseph Almond to the Rhode Island Department of Transportation.

<https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/politics/2024/01/29/washington-bridge-fiasco-mckee-sends-top-aide-to-oversee-investigation-ridot/72393662007/>

### **Kathy Gregg / Providence Journal / January 29**

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<https://x.com/kathyprojo/status/1751971613497516448?s=20>

\*Note: [links to detailed & damning Ken Block post]

Ted Nesi / WPRI / January 29, 2024

### **McKee sends senior aide to RIDOT, again seeks FEMA aid on Washington Bridge**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — Gov. Dan McKee announced Monday morning he is dispatching T. Joseph Almond, his senior deputy chief of staff, to the R.I. Department of Transportation to help deal with the Washington Bridge crisis. Separately, McKee's office said he called Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator Deanne Criswell over the weekend and renewed his request for "flexibility" to obtain aid for Rhode Island under the federal Stafford Act related to the bridge closure.

<https://www.wpri.com/traffic/i-195-washington-bridge-closure/mckee-sends-senior-aide-to-ridot-to-help-deal-with-washington-bridge-crisis/>

**Ted Nesi / WPRI / January 29, 2024**

Via Twitter: UPDATE: @GovDanMcKee made his first comments this AM on all the bridge developments "The whole idea is at some point, in the near future, to get a plan, and then to activate that plan so that people understand the time frame" (via @AlexandraLeslie)

<https://x.com/TedNesi/status/1752007125834887415?s=20>

UPDATE: @GovDanMcKee says he called the head of FEMA over the weekend to request "flexibility" under the Stafford Act so RI can get federal disaster aid if he declares an emergency over the Washington Bridge. FEMA previously told McKee RI wouldn't qualify [links article]

<https://x.com/TedNesi/status/1751992685794115849?s=20>

Article by Ted Nesi: McKee sends senior aide to RIDOT, again seeks FEMA aid on Washington Bridge

<https://www.wpri.com/traffic/i-195-washington-bridge-closure/mckee-sends-senior-aide-to-ridot-to-help-deal-with-washington-bridge-crisis/>

NBC 10 News / WJAR / January 29

### **McKee places senior deputy chief of staff to provide oversight on Washington Bridge**

(WJAR) — Gov. Dan McKee has appointed a senior staff member to provide oversight on the Washington Bridge operation, according to the governor's office. McKee's office said on Monday that Senior Deputy Chief of Staff Joseph Almond to the Rhode Island Department of Transportation to provide oversight and cross-agency coordination as the department figures out what is wrong with the bridge and if it could be fixed or needs to be completely replaced.

<https://turnto10.com/news/local/washington-bridge-closure-investigation-mckee-places-senior-deputy-chief-of-staff-joseph-almond-to-provide-oversight-on-washington-bridge-jan-29-2024>

### **Ed Fitzpatrick / Boston Globe / January 29**

Via twitter: .@GovDanMcKee's press secretary issues statement saying FEMA originally indicated RI would not qualify for funding under the Stafford Act if McKee declared an emergency re: the Washington Bridge closure, but over the weekend he called the FEMA administrator to request flexibility

<https://x.com/FitzProv/status/1751991040490246453?s=20>

### **Kathy Gregg / Providence Journal / January 29, 2024**

Via Twitter: McKee sending his deputy chief of staff - Joseph Almond, a former police lieutenant - over to DOT <https://x.com/kathyprojo/status/1751964557952668030?s=20>

More: Joe Almond, the senior aide @GovDanMcKee is dispatching to RIDOT is not an engineer, but he is a former 24-year police officer.

<https://x.com/kathyprojo/status/1751973117004480922?s=20>

More: Joe Almond's history: "A '74 Lincoln High School graduate, Almond worked in the town's police department for 24yrs before retiring as a lieutenant." Before town administrator, he worked for the then-Lincoln Park for 6yrs, managing security at the Old Louisquisset Road complex."

<https://x.com/kathyprojo/status/1751972603021943279?s=20>

Madison Crowley / ABC6 / January 29, 2024

**McKee appoints senior deputy chief to Washington Bridge investigation**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WLNE) — Governor Dan McKee has announced the appointment of Senior Deputy Chief of Staff Joseph Almond to the investigation of the Washington Bridge. On Friday, McKee's administration released a statement that the Governor has directed his Department of Administration to hire an independent, third-party expert to review the federal documents. The documents were requested earlier this week by United States Department of Justice and the Office of the Inspector General.

<https://www.abc6.com/mckee-appoints-senior-deputy-chief-to-washington-bridge-investigation/>

Anthony Vega / NECN / January 29

**Reed, Magaziner say they support federal investigation into Washington Bridge closure**

Rhode Island Sen. Jack Reed and U.S. Rep. Seth Magaziner said over the weekend that they support the federal investigation into the Washington Bridge closure, according to NBC affiliate WJAR. The U.S. Department of Justice and the Office of the Inspector General notified the Rhode Island Department of Transportation on Jan. 26 that they were investigating the closure of the bridge.

<https://www.necn.com/news/local/reed-magaziner-say-they-support-federal-investigation-into-washington-bridge-closure/3147818/>

**Kathy Gregg / Providence Journal / January 28**

Police: Drivers taking I-195 traffic frustrations out on officers | <http://WPRI.com>

<https://x.com/kathyprojo/status/1751649504292385109?s=20>

Article by Sarah Doiron:

**Sarah Doiron / WPRI / January 26**

<https://www.wpri.com/traffic/i-195-washington-bridge-closure/police-drivers-taking-i-195-traffic-frustrations-out-on-officers/>

Gino DeAngelis / ABC6 / January 28

**Magaziner, Reed say Congressional Delegation asked federal government to consider Washington Bridge investigation**

NARRAGANETT, R.I. (WLNE) — While helping to cut the ribbon on Narragansett's new library, Rep. Seth Magaziner and Sen. Jack Reed commented on the Justice Department's request for documents on the Washington bridge closure. The federal government is asking for documents, including inspection reports and photos, going back nearly a decade to investigate how money was used for bridge maintenance.

<https://www.abc6.com/magaziner-reed-say-congressional-delegation-asked-federal-government-to-consider-washington-bridge-investigation/>

Patrick Anderson / Providence Journal / January 28

### **Washington Bridge crisis prompts call for emergency declaration in East Providence**

EAST PROVIDENCE – The City Council president says problems caused by the partial closure of the Washington Bridge are so bad that Gov. Dan McKee should declare a state of emergency. "Currently, I am not looking to assess blame, but I believe that the crisis has reached an emergency situation which calls for federal assistance," Council President Bob Rodericks wrote Thursday in a letter to McKee. "Accordingly, I respectfully request that you consider enacting a 'State of Emergency' declaration."

<https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/local/2024/01/28/washington-bridge-crisis-sparks-call-emergency-declaration-east-providence-city-council-president/72380839007/>

**Kathy Gregg / Providence Journal / January 28**

Washington Bridge crisis prompts call for emergency declaration in East Providence [links article]

<https://x.com/kathyprojo/status/1751665298065817907?s=20>

Article by Patrick Anderson:

<https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/local/2024/01/28/washington-bridge-crisis-sparks-call-emergency-declaration-east-providence-city-council-president/72380839007/>

NBC 10 News / January 28

### **Reed and Magaziner welcome federal probe of Washington Bridge**

NARRAGANSETT, R.I. (WJAR) — Members of Rhode Island's congressional delegation said Sunday that the federal investigation into the Washington Bridge closure announced Friday is the right move. Sen. Jack Reed and Rep. Seth Magaziner told NBC 10's Katie Benoit that they back the probe announced by the U.S. Department of Justice and Office of the Inspector General, which have notified the Rhode Island Department of Transportation of their plans.

<https://turnto10.com/news/local/reed-and-magaziner-welcome-federal-probe-ridot-washington-bridge-buttigieg>

GoLocalProv News Team / January 27

### **What the Feds Demand Letter to McKee Admin on Washington Bridge Failure Tells Us**

The demand letter from the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) tells of some things about the initial scope of the federal government's investigation into the Washington Bridge failure, the Rhode Island Department of Transportation, and its contractors. Here is a breakdown of some key aspects of the 8-page demand letter.

<https://www.golocalprov.com/news/what-the-feds-demand-letter-to-mckee-admin-on-washington-bridge-failure-tel>

Patrick Anderson / Providence Journal / January 27

### **Q&A on the Washington Bridge investigation: What are the feds looking for?**

Federal investigators are probing allegations of fraud in work done over many years on the now-closed northern span of the Washington Bridge, they told Gov. Dan McKee's

administration on Friday. It won't help drivers stuck in Interstate 195 traffic, but it might shed some light on how a bridge that's been ticketed for repairs for nearly a decade could get in such bad shape that it needed to be abruptly closed on Dec. 11.

<https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/local/2024/01/27/washington-bridge-federal-investigation-what-you-need-to-know/72379022007/>

**Kathy Gregg / Providence Journal / January 27**

Via twitter: This is not the first time the feds have dug into RI's construction projects.

From June 2023:

<https://x.com/kathyprojo/status/1751286806736212396?s=20>

[@GovDanMcKee](https://twitter.com/GovDanMcKee) will no longer be attending tomorrow's ribbon-cutting for the new Narragansett library, his office tells me (he'd been listed as going). McKee held meetings today about the Washington Bridge crisis and expects to have more tomorrow, per comms director [@AndreaPalagi](https://twitter.com/AndreaPalagi)

<https://x.com/TedNesi/status/1751409160351019241?s=20>

More: A reader reminded me of the power of legislative oversight in 1990 when RI had a Republican Governor/Democrat-controlled legislature. Auditor General, a GA employee asked to dig in, found: "R.I. loses \$50 million on bridge State should have challenged contractor."

<https://x.com/kathyprojo/status/1751343516712628661?s=20>

More: Bethany Wong, chief of the civil division w/n US Attys office in RI, co-led the 6/10 investigation that resulted in a \$1M false claims settlement w/Barletta:

<https://justice.gov/usao-ri/pr/former-610-construction-project-supervisor-sentenced-making-false-statements#>.

She also signed the document demand letter delivered to RIDOT yesterday.

From June 2023:

<https://x.com/kathyprojo/status/1751289385918591433?s=20>

**Brian Amaral / Boston Globe / January 27**

East Providence City Council President Bob Rodericks is calling on [@GovDanMcKee](https://twitter.com/GovDanMcKee) to consider a "state of emergency" declaration over the Washington Bridge closure. "All efforts need to be focused on this major catastrophe," Rodericks says.

<https://x.com/bamaral44/status/1751251307560677813?s=20>

**Kathy Gregg / Providence Journal / January 26**

MAJOR update on Washington bridge investigation:

U.S. DOJ/Office of Inspector General are investigating an "allegation that false claims for payment for services and/or false statements in support of such payments have been submitted to the U.S. govt"

<https://x.com/kathyprojo/status/1751064987760529521?s=20>

More: So much work - so many contractors - on Washington Bridge. From Sept. 2014: "The project, paid for entirely with federal highway funds and undertaken by Cardi Corp., required major renovations to the bridge supports." [links old article]

<https://x.com/kathyprojo/status/1751087677942661437?s=20>

NBC 10 News / January 26

### **East Providence police face harassment due to Washington Bridge closure**

Police on the frontlines are feeling the anger from drivers about the Washington Bridge. The union representing police officers in East Providence said on Friday that their members are being harassed, and even attacked while working details related to the closure of the bridge. The International Brotherhood of Police Officers Local 569 sent out a statement.

<https://turnto10.com/news/local/east-providence-police-face-harassment-due-to-washingt-on-bridge-closure-rhode-island-southern-new-england-construction-january-26-2024>

Sarah Doiron / WPRI / January 26

### **Police: Drivers taking I-195 traffic frustrations out on officers**

EAST PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — The East Providence police union is asking for drivers to be patient throughout the Washington Bridge closure, which has upended the I-195 corridor for more than a month. East Providence Detective Cpl. Kurt Ripke, president of International Brotherhood of Police Officers Local 569, said in a statement that some drivers have been taking their frustrations out on officers while sitting in traffic.

<https://www.wpri.com/traffic/i-195-washington-bridge-closure/police-drivers-taking-i-195-traffic-frustrations-out-on-officers/>

Kathy Gregg & Patrick Anderson / Providence Journal / January 26

### **Feds probe alleged 'false claims' of work, inspections on Washington Bridge. What we know.**

PROVIDENCE — The U.S. Department of Justice and Office of Inspector General are investigating the circumstances around the shutdown of the westbound span of the Washington Bridge, and, more specifically, an "allegation that false claims for payment for services and/or false statements in support of such payments have been submitted to the U.S. government." The federal agencies are "seeking documents and records related to the Washington Bridge," Olivia DaRocha, a spokeswoman for Gov. Dan McKee, wrote in an email Friday evening.

<https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/politics/2024/01/26/what-will-happen-with-the-washington-bridge-report-may-take-months/72366756007/>

Ted Nesi / WPRI / January 26

### **McKee: Feds are investigating I-195 Washington Bridge closure**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — Federal investigators have informed Rhode Island officials that they are looking into how money was spent leading up to the closure of the Washington Bridge, Gov. Dan McKee's office announced Friday night. In an email to reporters at 6 p.m., McKee press secretary Olivia Darocha said investigators from the U.S. Department of Justice

and the U.S. Department of Transportation's inspector general are "seeking documents and records related to the Washington Bridge" from the R.I. Department of Transportation.

<https://www.wpri.com/news/politics-government/mckee-feds-are-investigating-i-195-washington-bridge-closure/>

NBC 10 News / WJAR / January 26

### **Federal investigation launched into Washington Bridge closure**

The United States Department of Justice and Office of the Inspector General notified the Rhode Island Department of Transportation on Friday that they are investigating the closure of the Washington Bridge. In a statement from Governor Dan McKee's press secretary, documents and records related to the Washington Bridge will be examined. NBC 10 received the document sent to the Rhode Island Department of Transportation.

<https://turnto10.com/news/local/federal-investigation-launched-into-rhode-islands-washington-bridge-closure-southern-new-england-rhode-island-january-26-2024>

Eli Sherman, Ted Nesi & Tim White /WPRI / January 26

### **Lawmakers: Alviti still weeks away from decision on I-195 Washington Bridge**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — R.I. Department of Transportation leaders don't expect to know for at least another month whether the Washington Bridge needs to be fixed or torn down, according to lawmakers briefed on the situation Friday. The new timeline emerged during a virtual meeting R.I. Department of Administration Director Peter Alviti held with East Bay legislators, after state leaders had spent the past week declining to offer an updated timeline for the bridge repairs. Multiple people said Alviti told them he doesn't expect engineers inspecting the bridge to report their findings until late February or early March.

<https://www.wpri.com/news/lawmakers-alviti-still-weeks-away-from-decision-on-i-195-washington-bridge/>

Patrick Anderson / Providence Journal / January 26, 2024

### **When will the Washington Bridge report be ready? Murky timeline begins to form.**

Rhode Island transportation officials expect to get a report on what's ailing the closed westbound span of the Washington Bridge by the end of February or early March, according to East Bay lawmakers who were updated on the repair project Friday. At the request of a group of 11 lawmakers whose constituents are impacted by the bridge closure, Rhode Island Director of Transportation Director Peter Alviti Jr. briefed them in an hour-and-a-half long conference call Friday morning.

[https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/politics/2024/01/26/what-will-happen-with-the-washington-bridge-report-may-take-months/72366756007/?utm\\_campaign=snd-autopilot](https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/politics/2024/01/26/what-will-happen-with-the-washington-bridge-report-may-take-months/72366756007/?utm_campaign=snd-autopilot)

Brian Amaral / Boston Globe / January 26

### **Timeline emerges for answers on what it will take to fix the Washington Bridge**

PROVIDENCE — State transportation officials provided a timeframe of late February to mid-March for the next major update on what to do about the Washington Bridge westbound, according to lawmakers who were briefed Friday. East Bay lawmakers participated in an hour-and-a-half Microsoft Teams call with R.I. Department of Transportation Director Peter Alviti. According to state Representative Jason Knight, a Democrat representing Barrington, Alviti said they'd have a sense of the plan to get the bridge back open by late February or mid-March, when consultant reports come back.

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/01/26/metro/timeline-emerges-for-answers-on-what-it-will-take-to-fix-ris-washington-bridge/>

**Patrick Anderson / Providence Journal / January 26**

New from @GovDanMcKee 's office. The US Department of Justice is investigating the Washington Bridge

<https://x.com/PatrickAnderso/status/1751017541793714537?s=20>

More: US Dept. of Justice, Inspector General investigating Washington Bridge shutdown

<https://x.com/PatrickAnderso/status/1751023057219604516?s=20>

More: The Justice Department is seeking documents from @RIDOTNews to see if a violation of the False Claims Act occurred with the Washington Bridge

<https://x.com/PatrickAnderso/status/1751064292634325079?s=20>

**Tim White / WPRI / January 26, 2024**

Via Twitter: NEWS: Barrington Rep. Jason Knight just got off RIDOT Dir. Alviti's call with East Bay lawmakers. He says they were told engineers inspecting the Washington Bridge are expected to report their findings (including whether the bridge has to be rebuilt) by late Feb or early March.

<https://x.com/TimWhiteRI/status/1750909679520162000?s=20>

**Reply to Tweet: Ted Nesi / WPRI / January 26, 2024**

To put this in perspective: RIDOT's initial timeline for fixing the bridge (approx. 3 months) is now the timeline just for diagnosing what's \*wrong\* with the bridge

<https://x.com/TedNesi/status/1750914011497996384?s=20>

**More per Ted Nesi:** NEW from @RISpeaker on the Washington Bridge: "My position has been very clear and I am not changing. I am committed to holding a House Oversight Committee hearing before the February recess. I am open to a joint hearing with the Senate or holding a hearing just with the House"

<https://x.com/TedNesi/status/1750936958920978673?s=20>

Sarah Doiron & Matt Paddock / WPRI / January 25

**RI lawmaker calls for RIDOT director's resignation amid bridge closure**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — R.I. Rep. Enrique Sanchez didn't mince words when asked for his thoughts on the Washington Bridge closure, which has upended the I-195 corridor for more than a month. Sanchez expressed his frustration with the bridge closure and called upon Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) Director Peter Alviti to step down "for the common good of Rhode Islanders."

<https://www.wpri.com/traffic/i-195-washington-bridge-closure/ri-lawmaker-calls-for-ridot-directors-resignation-amid-bridge-closure/>

Temi-Tope Adeleye / WJAR / January 25

### **Bristol County locals talk Washington Bridge impact**

SEEKONK, Mass. — It's not just East Bay Rhode Islanders who've grown weary of the wait to get over the Washington Bridge. Bristol County, Massachusetts motorists are tired of the tie-ups too. An Exxon station on Fall River Avenue in Seekonk serves customers from Massachusetts and Rhode Island, and both are not happy with the Washington Bridge closure.

<https://turnto10.com/news/local/bristol-county-locals-talk-washington-bridge-impact-south-new-england-rhode-island-massachusetts-seekonk-east-providence-january-25-2024>

\*GoLocalProv/ January 25, 2024

### **EXCLUSIVE: Top Construction Executive Cardi Says RIDOT Was Warned About Washington Bridge**

In an exclusive interview with GoLocal, Stephen A. Cardi, Sr., who helped to lead one of the top construction companies in the Northeast for more than 50 years, said the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) ignored warnings and moved forward with a design that undermined the structural integrity of the Washington Bridge. For decades, the 100-plus-year-old Cardi Corporation was one of the most successful construction companies in New England.

<https://www.golocalprov.com/news/exclusive-top-construction-executive-cardi-says-ridot-was-warned-about-wash>

Kristin Burnell / WPRI / January 25, 2024

### **600+ businesses impacted by bridge closure apply for support**

EAST PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — Businesses across Providence and East Providence continue to see impacts from the Washington Bridge breakdown. The U.S. Small Business Administration has since opened recovery locations to help, but the East Providence center is closing its doors on Friday. Public Affairs Specialist with the SBA, Julie Garrett, said the location has helped 135 people since learning about the bridge failure on Dec. 11.

[https://www.wpri.com/traffic/i-195-washington-bridge-closure/600-businesses-impacted-by-bridge-closure-apply-for-support/?utm\\_medium=referral&utm\\_source=t.co&utm\\_campaign=socialflow](https://www.wpri.com/traffic/i-195-washington-bridge-closure/600-businesses-impacted-by-bridge-closure-apply-for-support/?utm_medium=referral&utm_source=t.co&utm_campaign=socialflow)

Gabrielle Caracciolo / WJAR / January 25

### **Increased traffic from Washington Bridge closure impacts workers, businesses**

Across Rhode Island, the Washington Bridge shutdown is impacting businesses, workers and customers alike. "It's been a nightmare," Alisha Rodrigues, owner of Lavish Salon, said. "Nobody wants to cross the bridge, nobody wants to go near the bridge, so it is affecting all businesses in this area."

<https://turnto10.com/news/washington-bridge-closure/increased-traffic-impacts-workers-businesses-salon-work-from-home-retirement-early-dlt-labor-training-employees-jan-25-2024>

Leanna Faulk / WJAR / January 24

### **Questions arise over Washington Bridge shutdown and inspection validity**

The partial shutdown of the Washington Bridge raised a number of questions, including how it was able to pass recent inspections. NBC 10 brought many of those questions directly to the people in charge, but it is still unclear how long until we find out why and who, if anyone, will be held responsible. Rhode Island Department of Transportation Director Peter Alviti was unable to provide an answer.

<https://turnto10.com/news/local/questions-arise-over-washington-bridge-shutdown-and-inspection-validity-southern-new-england-rhode-island-officials-engineers-january-24-2024>

Melanie DaSilva / WPRI / January 24, 2024

### **East Providence officers getting pay bump for Washington Bridge detail**

EAST PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — The westbound side of the Washington Bridge may be closed a lot longer than first thought. This comes as frustrations continue to grow over the resulting traffic congestion. Drivers going through the area have probably seen police details helping direct traffic during rush hours due to the bridge.

[https://www.wpri.com/traffic/i-195-washington-bridge-closure/east-providence-officers-getting-pay-bump-for-washington-bridge-detail/?utm\\_source=t.co&utm\\_campaign=socialflow&utm\\_medium=referral](https://www.wpri.com/traffic/i-195-washington-bridge-closure/east-providence-officers-getting-pay-bump-for-washington-bridge-detail/?utm_source=t.co&utm_campaign=socialflow&utm_medium=referral)

NBC 10 News / January 24

### **NBC 10 presses McKee, Alviti for answers about Washington Bridge closure**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WJAR) — As the future of the Washington Bridge remains uncertain, there are still many questions about how we've gotten to this point. NBC 10 News talked one-on-one with each of the state leaders calling the shots. Rhode Island Department of Transportation Director Peter Alviti told NBC 10's Gabrielle Caracciolo several times Wednesday that he couldn't answer some of her questions because he is still waiting for the engineers looking at the Washington Bridge to finish their reports.

<https://turnto10.com/news/washington-bridge-closure/westbound-span-interstate-195-west-east-providence-rhode-island-department-of-transportation-governor-dan-mckee-safety-decision-demolition-rebuild-january-24-2024>

**WPRI / January 24, 2024**

City councilors in East Providence voted to approve a \$20 per hour pay bump for officers working police details related to the Washington Bridge. [links Melanie DaSilva article noted above]

<https://x.com/wpri12/status/1750132654190604357?s=20>

**Ted Nesi / WPRI / January 23**

Here's the current list of firms working on the Washington Bridge, per a RIDOT spox [includes image of firms]

<https://x.com/TedNesi/status/1750136869097267520?s=20>

Gabrielle Caracciolo / WJAR / January 23

**Alviti declines interview request to answer questions about Washington Bridge project**

EAST PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WJAR) — Gov. Dan McKee and Rhode Island Department of Transportation Director Peter Alviti declined requests to be interviewed Tuesday to answer additional questions about the Washington Bridge closure. After announcing Monday that the original three-month reopening timeline was no longer feasible, they only took a handful of questions from reporters, leaving many up in the air.

<https://turnto10.com/news/washington-bridge-closure/governor-dan-mckee-rhode-island-department-of-transportation-director-peter-alviti-questions-timeline-construction-demolition-engineers-report-january-23-2024>

Brittany Bowker & Brian Amaral / Boston Globe / January 23

**East Providence slogs through traffic, faces prospect of no quick fix for Washington Bridge**

EAST PROVIDENCE, R.I. — Every weekday morning and evening, Gregory Waksmulski watches a line of cars crawl along outside his home on Ingraham Street. The short road, which normally takes 30 seconds to drive down, is taking cars more like 10 minutes these days, making it difficult and time consuming for residents who live there to drive anywhere. The cut-through drivers take between two of the city's main thoroughfares, Warren Avenue and Broadway, has been near gridlock since the Dec. 11 closure of the westbound lanes of the Washington Bridge.

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/01/23/metro/washington-bridge-closure-amid-east-providence-traffic-prospect-of-no-quick-fix/>

GoLocalProv / January 22, 2024

**NEW: Alviti Admits “Complete Rebuild” of Washington Bridge Possible — Latest in RIDOT Bridge Failure**

Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) Director Peter Alviti said Monday that a “complete rebuild” of the Washington Bridge could be possible, depending on a final analysis of engineers who are currently inspecting the bridge. It has now been a month and a half since RIDOT shut down west bound lanes on I-195 in early December due to the bridge failure, disrupting traffic for weeks and hurting businesses across the state.

<https://www.golocalprov.com/news/new-alviti-admits-complete-rebuild-of-washington-bridge-possible-latest-in>

Patrick Anderson / Providence Journal / January 22, 2024

**All options, including complete rebuild, on table for Washington Bridge, Alviti says in update**

Rhode Island Department of Transportation Director Peter Alviti said Monday that a final decision on the scope of repairs to the I-195 Washington Bridge will not be made until consultants have delivered a complete report on the bridge's condition, but a complete rebuild of the entire bridge is not off the table. Alviti and Governor Dan McKee gave an update on the Washington Bridge in a hastily called press conference Monday afternoon as rumors swirled around the project.

<https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/local/2024/01/22/195-washington-bridge-closure-update-from-gov-mckee-and-peter-alviti/72314421007/>

Associate Press / January 22, 2024

### **Rhode Island transportation officials say key bridge may need to be completely demolished**

Repairs to a critical Rhode Island bridge that was partially shut down over safety concerns last month could include the demolition of the span, state transportation officials said Monday. Peter Alviti, director of the Rhode Island Department of Transportation, said all options are being considered, including the possibility of a complete rebuild of the bridge that carries Interstate 195 over the Seekonk River from Providence to East Providence and serves as a key gateway to Providence. He didn't give any cost estimate but said the repairs would be completed as quickly as safely possible.

<https://whdh.com/news/rhode-island-transportation-officials-say-key-bridge-may-need-to-be-completely-demolished/>

Sarah Doiron / WPRI / January 22, 2024

### **RIDOT: Washington Bridge may need to be demolished**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — The westbound side of the Washington Bridge, which abruptly shut down last month after structural deficiencies were discovered, may need to be torn down and completely rebuilt, Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) Director Peter Alviti acknowledged Monday. Alviti stressed that engineers are still taking a “comprehensive look” at the bridge’s structure and determining whether demolishing the bridge will be necessary. But that possibility hasn’t been ruled out just yet, he said. The bridge will either undergo extensive repairs, partial reconstruction or a complete rebuild, according to Alviti.

[https://www.wpri.com/news/local-news/providence/ridot-washington-bridge-may-need-to-be-demolished/?utm\\_source=t.co&utm\\_medium=referral&utm\\_campaign=socialflow](https://www.wpri.com/news/local-news/providence/ridot-washington-bridge-may-need-to-be-demolished/?utm_source=t.co&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=socialflow)

### **Patrick Anderson / Providence Journal / January 22, 2024**

Via Twitter: The initial 3-month repair timeline for the bridge has been thrown out, replaced with "indefinite." No estimates provided for how long it would take and what it would cost to build a new span.

<https://x.com/PatrickAnderso/status/1749532214532907437?s=20>

### **Kathy Gregg / Providence Journal / January 22, 2024**

Via Twitter: NOT good news from East Bay commuters. This bridge has been under construction on-and-off since I moved to RI in 1979. How did it get this bad?

<https://x.com/kathyprojo/status/1749531158600126932?s=20>

#### **ABC6 / January 22, 2024**

Via Twitter: Per ABC6: RIDOT on Washington Bridge repair: "It could be a complete rebuild of the entire bridge." <https://x.com/ABC6/status/1749527169838014847?s=20>

#### **Brian Amaral / Boston Globe / January 22, 2024**

Via Twitter: The takeaway from this presser: They've found more issues than previously known on the Washington Bridge westbound. The original 3-month estimate is now out the window, with a lot TBD. <https://x.com/bamaral44/status/1749523489885721051?s=20>

#### **Ted Nesi / WPRI / January 22, 2024**

Via Twitter regarding Dir. Peter Alviti press conference about Washington Bridge: RIDOT Director Alviti confirms the bridge \*might\* need to be completely rebuilt. Says that's 1 of multiple scenarios being examined by outside consultants. Waiting for details on how that would affect the timeline <https://x.com/TedNesi/status/1749521276090118196?s=20>  
\*More: No answer yet on how long bridge could be closed for a complete rebuild or how much it could cost. Alviti says he won't speculate on anything until the outside consultants deliver their inspection report.

<https://x.com/TedNesi/status/1749522773418848299?s=20>

More: Not only is there currently no timeline for when the bridge will actually be reopened - right now there isn't even a timeline for when RIDOT will be able to answer that.

<https://x.com/TedNesi/status/1749525478816518533?s=20>

NBC 10 NEWS / WJAR / January 22, 2024

#### **East Providence mayor looks to dispel rumors about Washington Bridge**

(WJAR) — East Providence Mayor Bob DaSilva is looking to dispel rumors about the Washington Bridge. Closing of the Washington Bridge's west side has caused traffic problems for East Providence, and a new rumor says the bridge needs to be torn down. DaSilva took to Facebook to assure residents that such drastic decisions have not yet been made.

<https://turnto10.com/news/local/east-providence-mayor-looks-to-dispel-rumors-about-washington-bridge-commuter-crisis-heavy-traffic-jan-22-2024>

Providence Journal Staff / January 18, 2024

#### **East Bay lawmakers want answers regarding Washington Bridge closure, repair timeline**

PROVIDENCE – Lawmakers representing the East Bay want regular updates from the Rhode Island Department of Transportation on repair work being done on the Washington Bridge. The repair work, which began in early December when the westbound portion was closed for safety reasons, has caused traffic headaches, and the lawmakers say their constituents want answers.

[https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/local/2024/01/18/washington-bridge-closure-east-bay-lawmakers-want-updates-from-ridot/72265678007/?utm\\_campaign=snd-auto-pilot](https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/local/2024/01/18/washington-bridge-closure-east-bay-lawmakers-want-updates-from-ridot/72265678007/?utm_campaign=snd-auto-pilot)

Eli Sherman & Ted Nesi / WPRI / January 17, 2024

**East Bay lawmakers want clearer I-195 bridge closure updates, calling traffic ‘unbearable’**

EAST PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — A group of state legislators who represent the East Bay is calling on the state’s transportation agency to provide “regular comprehensive updates” about repairs to the Washington Bridge, saying its closure continues to cause “unbearable” traffic. The 11 representatives and senators penned a letter Wednesday to R.I. Department of Transportation Director Peter Alviti, telling him last month’s closure of the westbound Washington Bridge on I-195 has created “sudden and severe hardship” for their communities.

[https://www.wpri.com/news/politics-government/east-bay-lawmakers-want-clearer-i-195-bridge-closure-updates-calling-traffic-unbearable/?utm\\_source=t.co&utm\\_campaign=social-flow&utm\\_medium=referral](https://www.wpri.com/news/politics-government/east-bay-lawmakers-want-clearer-i-195-bridge-closure-updates-calling-traffic-unbearable/?utm_source=t.co&utm_campaign=social-flow&utm_medium=referral)

Melanie DaSilva / WPRI / January 11, 2024

**Washington Bridge repairs may take longer than expected**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — It’s been one month since the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) abruptly shut down one side of I-195, which has caused monumental traffic delays in surrounding communities. RIDOT Director Peter Alviti said the closure was necessary for safety reasons after an engineer sounded the alarm about significant structural issues on the westbound side. The bridge is used by more than 96,000 vehicles per day.

<https://www.wpri.com/news/local-news/providence/its-been-one-month-since-the-washington-bridge-closure/>

Kathy Gregg / Providence Journal / January 10, 2024

**St. Mary’s, Washington Bridge shutdown will get a closer look from lawmakers in coming weeks**

PROVIDENCE – A legislative probe of what happened that required the abrupt closing of the westbound lanes of Interstate 195 West on Dec. 11 is moving up on the legislative agenda. In an interview this week, House Speaker K. Joseph Shekarchi told The Journal that he expects the first House Oversight Committee hearing this year will happen in the “next week or two” and will focus on St. Mary’s Home for Children in the wake of a report on “significant safety concerns and abusive living conditions” there.

<https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/politics/2024/01/10/ri-politics-st-marys-washington-bridge-closure-oversight-hearings/72177730007/>

Amanda Milkovits / Boston Globe / January 4, 2024

**Riders taking advantage of free ferry service between Bristol and Providence while they can**

Since RIDOT has provided free ferries to help alleviate traffic during the partial closure of the Washington Bridge, 2,814 passengers have used the service.

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/01/04/metro/washington-bridge-closure-ri-residents-taking-advantage-of-free-ferries-while-they-can/>

Kathy Gregg / Providence Journal / January 3, 2024

**Via Twitter: McKee administration is “in the process” of hiring firm to conduct “peer review” of the only known investigation - by a RIDOT contractor - of what happened to the “rods” (plural) holding up the Washington bridge. No FHWA?**

\*This was regarding the statement from DOA.

<https://x.com/kathyprojo/status/1742665354227102118?s=20>

Ed Fitzpatrick / Boston Globe / January 3, 2024

**Via Twitter: The Dept. of Administration says it's in the process of hiring the engineering firm of McNary Bergeron & Johannesen to conduct a peer engineering review of WJE's investigation into the failure of the tie-down rods on the Washington Bridge.**

\*This was regarding the statement from DOA.

<https://x.com/FitzProv/status/1742650829805383790?s=20>

## DECEMBER 2023

Eryn Dion / Providence Journal / December 21, 2023

**Peter Alviti: RIDOT director faces bridge repairs, possible RIPTA showdown**

In the waning weeks of 2023, Rhode Island Department of Transportation Director Peter Alviti found himself in an unenviable position as the face of the agency amid a transportation disaster that paralyzed the state for several days. While the bypass lanes for westbound traffic on Interstate 195 are now open on the eastbound side of the Washington Bridge and traffic flow is improving, this is not the last we'll hear of the issue. Already there are calls for independent investigations and for Alviti to be pulled in front of oversight hearings, and serious questions are being raised about the condition of Rhode Island's other bridges, many of which are rated as being structurally deficient or in poor condition.

<https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/good-news/2023/12/21/rhode-island-transportation-director-peter-alviti-to-direct-washington-bridge-repairs-24-in-2024/71971662007/>

Samantha Latos / ABC6 / December 21

**Department of Transportation to close emergency vehicle lane on I-195 for reconstruction**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WLNE) — The Rhode Island Department of Transportation said Thursday that it will close the lane open to emergency vehicles on Interstate 195 west. The department said the lane will close around noon for reconstruction. “Travelers using the bypass lanes will notice that emergency vehicles are now blended into regular traffic and

should slow down and move over for ambulances, police cars and other emergency vehicles,” the department announced on social media.

<https://www.abc6.com/department-of-transportation-to-close-emergency-vehicle-lane-on-i-195-for-reconstruction/>

Kayla Fish / WPRI / December 20

### **Ambulances choosing I-195 bypass lanes over route for emergency vehicles**

EAST PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — It’s been less than a week since the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) opened the I-195 West bypass lanes on Washington Bridge. Commuters who have driven through those bypass lanes may have also noticed ambulances using them as well, as opposed to the separate lane RIDOT left open for certain emergency vehicles. The lane was designed to allow ambulances and other emergency vehicles to get to the capital city in a more timely fashion.

[https://www.wpri.com/news/local-news/east-bay/ambulances-choosing-i-195-bypass-lanes-over-route-left-open-for-emergency-vehicles/?utm\\_source=wpri\\_app&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_content=share-link](https://www.wpri.com/news/local-news/east-bay/ambulances-choosing-i-195-bypass-lanes-over-route-left-open-for-emergency-vehicles/?utm_source=wpri_app&utm_medium=social&utm_content=share-link)

Samantha Latos / ABC6 / December 20

### **Officials warn drivers to avoid Washington Bridge due to traffic incidents**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WLNE) — The Rhode Island Department of Transportation said multiple incidents were reported on the Washington Bridge on Wednesday. Officials warned drivers to avoid the bridge and take different routes.

<https://www.abc6.com/officials-warn-drivers-to-avoid-washington-bridge-due-to-traffic-incidents/>

Tim White / WPRI / December 19

### **Overtime costs in Providence, East Providence mounting amid bridge crisis**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) – Providence and East Providence so far have collectively shelled out more than \$73,000 in police overtime alone following the abrupt closure of the Washington Bridge last week. The overtime tab for East Providence police is \$39,808 and \$33,625 in Providence. Mayor Brett Smiley said Tuesday that the city’s Department of Public Works has also seen a spike in overtime, as workers had to reprogram stop lights and alter traffic patterns. But the Police Department’s operating budget has been most affected.

<https://www.wpri.com/target-12/overtime-costs-in-providence-east-providence-mounting-amid-bridge-crisis/>

Patrick Anderson / Providence Journal / December 19

### **Investigation into the Washington Bridge's condition is coming. What will happen next.**

Gov. Dan McKee's administration will conduct a two-part investigation into why the condition of the Washington Bridge deteriorated so suddenly that the state had to abruptly close Interstate 195 West last week. First, one of the RI Department of Transportation's regular bridge inspection contractors will conduct a "forensic analysis" of the bridge and how anchor rods keeping it secure broke sometime between July and December. Then, to

make sure that analysis is done well, the Department of Administration is seeking a second consultant and "independent expert to ensure that a thorough review of what led to the Washington Bridge closure is completed," DOA spokeswoman Laura Hart said.

<https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/state/2023/12/19/washington-bridge-investigation-will-include-forensic-analysis/71974433007/>

Brian Crandall / WJAR / December 19

### **'This is the time,' McKee says to bridge closure review**

With the worst of the traffic mess apparently in the rearview mirror, Rhode Island Gov. Dan McKee is now ready to move to the questioning portion of the Washington Bridge closure response. "This is the time. We've got traffic flowing in a way that's helping our communities. Now a follow up makes all the sense in the world," McKee said Tuesday, when asked about the announcement that came late Monday afternoon.

<https://turnto10.com/i-team/washington-bridge-closure-independent-review-westbound-lanes-safety-governor-dan-mckee-east-providence-rhode-island-department-transportation-december-19-2023>

Alexandra Leslie / WPRI / December 19

### **McKee calls for Washington Bridge review, expresses confidence in RIDOT**

EAST PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — Gov. Dan McKee says he's making good on a promise to review the circumstances surrounding the abrupt Washington Bridge closure, although he expressed confidence that his administration acted appropriately. The R.I. Department of Administration announced Monday the McKee administration would hire an outside contractor to conduct a forensic analysis on the bridge to independently determine what went wrong and when.

<https://www.wpri.com/target-12/mckee-calls-for-washington-bridge-review-expresses-confidence-in-ridot/>

Janine Weisman / RI Current / December 19

### **Center to help businesses impacted by bridge closure opens at main public library in East Providence**

EAST PROVIDENCE — The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Business Recovery Center opened Tuesday at the main public library in this city, offering assistance to businesses impacted by the sudden closure of the Washington Bridge for emergency repairs. Gov. Dan McKee joined SBA Rhode Island District Director Mark S. Hayward, congressional delegates and state and municipal leaders gathered at Weaver Memorial Library, 41 Grove Ave., to celebrate the center's opening. Officials had originally announced the recovery center would open Monday, but heavy rain and high winds from a storm made travel difficult.

<https://rhodeislandcurrent.com/briefs/center-to-help-businesses-impacted-by-bridge-closure-re-opens-at-main-public-library-in-east-providence/>

Ed Fitzpatrick / Boston Globe / December 19

### **McKee administration will contract for external review of bridge crisis**

The US Small Business Administration has opened a recovery center in East Providence for businesses hurt by last week's closure of the westbound lanes of I-195 on the Washington Bridge. / Governor Daniel J. McKee's administration will hire a contractor "to provide independent oversight and review of the Washington Bridge forensic analysis" in the wake of last week's closure of the westbound lanes of the Interstate 195 bridge between East Providence and Providence.

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2023/12/19/metro/washington-bridge-closure-mckee-contracting-for-external-review-of-bridge-crisis/>

Melanie DaSilva / WPRI / December 19, 2023

### **RI launching support center for businesses impacted by bridge closure**

EAST PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — With the I-195 West bypass lanes open, local businesses are looking to bounce back. Last week, Gov. Dan McKee urged Rhode Islanders to eat and shop local this holiday season, noting the impact the Washington Bridge shutdown has had on businesses and their workers.

[https://www.wpri.com/news/local-news/providence/ri-launching-support-center-for-businesses-impacted-by-bridge-closure/?utm\\_campaign=socialflow&utm\\_medium=referral&utm\\_source=t.co](https://www.wpri.com/news/local-news/providence/ri-launching-support-center-for-businesses-impacted-by-bridge-closure/?utm_campaign=socialflow&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=t.co)

GoLocalProv / December 19, 2023

### **McKee Admin Claims It Will Hire Firm to Review RIDOT Bridge Failure - Promises "Independence"**

Last Wednesday, Governor Dan McKee appeared at a press event with Providence Mayor Brett Smiley in Wayland Square and refused to answer GoLocalProv News Editor Kate Nagle's questions about an independent review of the failure of the Washington Bridge. The failure has adversely impacted hundreds of thousands of Rhode Islanders, causing schools and businesses to shut down.

<https://www.golocalprov.com/news/McKee-Admin-Claims-It-Will-Hire-Firm-to-Review-RIDOT-Bridge-Failure-Prom>

Brian Crandall / WJAR / December 18

### **NBC 10 I-Team: McKee calls for independent review of Washington Bridge closure**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WJAR) — Rhode Island will bring in an outside set of eyes to see what, if anything, went wrong leading up to the sudden closure of the westbound Washington Bridge a week ago. The Rhode Island Department of Administration announced late Monday afternoon that, at the direction of Gov. Dan McKee, the state will now hire a contractor "to provide independent oversight and review of the Washington Bridge forensic analysis for the Department of Transportation."

<https://turnto10.com/i-team/mckee-administration-will-hire-independent-contractor-for-washington-bridge-investigation>

Sarah Doiron / WPRI / December 18

### **State hiring independent contractor to examine I-195 bridge damage**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — The R.I. Department of Administration will be hiring a contractor to independently review the damage that prompted the abrupt closure of one side of the Washington Bridge last week. The contractor is being hired at the direction of Gov. Dan McKee.

<https://www.wpri.com/news/local-news/providence/state-hiring-independent-contractor-to-examine-i-195-bridge-damage/>

ABC6 / December 18

### **Outside contractor to oversee Washington Bridge forensic analysis**

State officials said that contractor, who was not immediately named, will provide independent oversight and review of the analysis for the bridge.

<https://www.abc6.com/outside-contractor-to-oversee-washington-bridge-forensic-analysis/>

Bill Bartholomew / WPRO/Podcast / December 18

**Tweet** of DOA statement calling for procurement of a contractor to conduct forensic analysis of the Washington Bridge.

<https://x.com/BillBartholomew/status/1736921734966546756?s=20>

Tim White / WPRI / December 14

### **Washington Bridge fiasco comes as RI bridges improve; now 46th in US**

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (WPRI) — The Washington Bridge carrying I-195 West into Providence is one of 169 bridges considered in “poor” condition in Rhode Island, according to the most recent report by the state’s transportation agency. But Rhode Island has made progress improving the condition of its bridges overall since 2016, when then-Gov. Gina Raimondo and lawmakers enacted an ambitious, expensive and controversial infrastructure-improvement program dubbed RhodeWorks.

<https://www.wpri.com/target-12/washington-bridge-fiasco-comes-as-ri-bridges-improve-now-46th-worst-in-us/>

Chris Shea / RI Current / December 14

### **7 things to know about the I-195 West Washington Bridge closure**

People are adjusting. That’s the message state officials are sending as commuters endured their third day of detours from the westbound portion of the Washington Bridge on I-195 in East Providence. Gov. Dan McKee and his cabinet Thursday provided several updates on measures taken since Monday’s sudden highway closure after the discovery of broken anchor rods deemed a critical structural failure that put the bridge at risk of collapse.

<https://rhodeislandcurrent.com/2023/12/14/7-things-to-know-about-the-i-195-west-washington-bridge-closure/>

Patrick Anderson & Tom Mooney / Providence Journal / December 14

### **Latest on the Washington Bridge closure: Westbound lanes are open**

PROVIDENCE — Two-way traffic on Interstate 195 over the Washington Bridge has resumed this morning, potentially offering some relief from the traffic chaos created by an emergency closure of the bridge's westbound span Monday. While permanent repairs on the damaged span of the bridge are likely still months away, crews have scrambled to build a temporary way for two lanes of westbound traffic to share half of the eastbound span. RIDOT will reopen most on-ramps that had been closed earlier this week, according to a news release. It will also maintain a lane on the westbound bridge for emergency vehicles only.

<https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/state/2023/12/14/washington-bridge-closure-update-dec-14westbound-lanes-will-open-by-weekend/71919773007/>

GoLocalProv / December 14

### **McKee Defends Use of Indicted Contractor to Continue to Do Washington Bridge Work**

Governor Dan McKee is defending his decision to use a contractor to conduct emergency repairs to the Washington Bridge that is presently under state indictment.

The emergency repair work, which is expected to cost in the tens of millions of dollars, is being awarded by McKee without a bidding process.

<https://www.golocalprov.com/news/mckee-defends-use-of-indicted-contractor-to-continue-to-do-washington-bridg>

Kathy McCormack & David Sharp / WBUR / December 14

### **Emergency shut down of critical Rhode Island bridge snarls traffic**

A review of state inspection reports of a critical Rhode Island bridge that was partially shut down over safety concerns, resulting in major traffic headaches, led authorities to believe that “something catastrophic” happened since July that broke a support rod, the state's director of transportation said Wednesday. State authorities described the problem as a critical structural failure. The bridge carries Interstate 195 over the Seekonk River from Providence to East Providence and serves as a key gateway to Providence, the state's largest city. The bridge carries close to 100,000 vehicles every day.

<https://www.wbur.org/news/2023/12/14/emergency-shut-down-of-critical-rhode-island-bridge-snarls-traffic-authorities-cite-a-catastrophic-failure-in-bridge-supports>

Nancy Lavin / RI Current / December 13

### **Is Peter Alviti the messenger of bad news? Or the cause of it?**

One legislator pushes to impeach the embattled state transportation boss who is leading emergency repairs to the Washington Bridge. / The slew of phone calls, emergency meetings and press conferences in the wake of the I-195 Washington Bridge disaster have caused Peter Alviti Jr. to lose his voice. But not his cool.

<https://rhodeislandcurrent.com/2023/12/13/is-peter-alviti-the-messenger-of-bad-news-or-the-cause-of-it/>

Christina Prignano & Amanda Milkovitz / Boston Globe / December 13

## **The Washington Bridge is one of 120 ‘structurally deficient’ bridges in Rhode Island, according to federal data**

The abrupt closure of the westbound side of the Washington Bridge in Rhode Island this week has thrown commutes into chaos for thousands and forced students in East Providence to switch to remote learning — but it’s one of more than 100 in the state that are in need of repairs, federal data show. The bridge was closed suddenly Monday after officials determined that deterioration of critical components of the bridge meant it was in danger of collapse. The deterioration was discovered by a young engineer who happened to see it while working on the demolition of an old bridge deck.

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2023/12/13/metro/washington-bridge-one-of-120-structurally-deficient-bridges-in-ri/>

Ed Fitzpatrick & Amanda Milkovitz / Boston Globe / December 13

### **10 key points from R.I. officials about the Washington Bridge closure**

The bridge connects the cities of Providence and East Providence and is a key route for people traveling to and from the East Bay area. It was shut down suddenly on Dec. 11 after structural issues were discovered.

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2023/12/13/metro/washington-bridge-10-things-to-know-about-ris-i-195-bridge-closure/>

Jeremy C. Fox / Boston Globe / December 13

### **Here’s what to know about the Washington Bridge shutdown in Providence**

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation abruptly closed the westbound lanes of the Washington Bridge on Monday afternoon because of a critical failure of some original components from the 1960s, saying the bridge won’t be open to drivers headed west for weeks. RIDOT Director Peter Alviti Jr. said the state was moving hastily because of the threat of collapse of the heavily used 55-year-old bridge, which carries Interstate 195 traffic over the Seekonk River and connects Providence and East Providence, supporting about 90,000 vehicles a day.

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2023/12/13/metro/east-providence-bridge-shutdown/>

NECN / December 13

### **Drivers frustrated by traffic from closure of Providence's Washington Bridge**

The closure of the Washington Bridge has impacted the commute for the second day in a row as there has been gridlock as people try to find alternate routes, according to WJAR. It took more than an hour for commuters to get to Providence, according to reports. Due to the traffic, Rhode Island Gov. Dan McKee said municipalities will be financially reimbursed for costs related to the closed bridge, WJAR reports.

<https://www.necn.com/news/local/washington-bridge-closure-continues-to-impact-commute/3113737/>

Travis Andersen / Boston Globe / December 13

**‘Like the pandemic in reverse’: R.I. traffic nightmare from emergency bridge closure drags on as officials detail alternate routes**

EAST PROVIDENCE, R.I. — With students here attending class remotely and some 90,000 drivers facing a traffic nightmare after the sudden closure of the westbound side of the Washington Bridge, officials said Wednesday that they expect to open lanes this weekend on the eastbound side to allow traffic in both directions. Officials also plan to start running a 500-seat ferry between Bristol and Providence in the next week or two, the state’s transportation director, Peter Alviti Jr., said at a news briefing.

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2023/12/13/metro/rhode-island-bridge-closure/>

Kathy

Jim Parsons / Engineering News-Record / December 13

**Failing Anchor Rods Faulted for Rhode Island Bridge Closure**

The discovery of deteriorating structural components has forced the emergency closure of the westbound span of the Washington Bridge, one of Providence, R.I.’s key gateway structures. Constructed in 1968, the 1,671-ft-long bridge carrying I-195 over the Seekonk River had remained open during a five-year, \$78-million design-build reconstruction effort begun in 2021 by the Barletta Heavy Division and Aetna Bridge Co. joint venture, with VHB as lead designer. On Dec. 8, Rhode Island Dept. of Transportation (RIDOT) officials say, a VHB engineer noticed an apparent failure of a 2-ft-long steel anchor rod in a bridge section that was not part of the reconstruction work.

<https://www.enr.com/articles/57873-failing-anchor-rods-faulted-for-rhode-island-bridge-closure>

Don McCloud / Equipment World / December 13

**“Critical Failure” Uncovered on I-195 Bridge; Damage Photos Released**

A project to reconstruct a major bridge on Interstate 195 in Rhode Island uncovered a “critical failure” of anchor rods, leading to the emergency closing of the westbound side of the bridge indefinitely. The failure was uncovered December 8 on the Washington Bridge in East Providence on anchor rods of the original bridge, which was built in 1968, according to the Rhode Island Department of Transportation. (More photos of the damage can be seen at the end of this story.)

<https://www.equipmentworld.com/roadbuilding/article/15660149/critical-failure-closes-i195-washington-bridge-in-rhode-island>

Amanda Milkovits & Ed Fitzpatrick / Boston Globe / December 12

**Engineer spotted ‘concerning issue’ 3 days before I-195 westbound bridge closed, R.I. DOT chief says**

“This is the biggest story in Rhode Island since COVID. Nothing else has affected 90,000 people a day like this,” said one East Providence resident whose 15-minute Providence commute took nearly 2 hours Tuesday.

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2023/12/12/metro/engineer-spotted-concerning-issue-3-days-before-i-195-westbound-bridge-closed-ri-dot-chief-says/>

Kathy McCormack and David Sharp / Associated Press / December 12

**Busy Rhode Island bridge closed after 'critical failure' found, may not reopen for months**

Authorities have found a critical structural failure in one of the busiest bridges in Rhode Island and have closed its westbound side to begin a repair job expected to take months. The Washington Bridge carries Interstate 195 over the Seekonk River from Providence to East Providence and serves as a key gateway to the state's largest city.

<https://www.foxnews.com/us/busy-rhode-island-bridge-closed-critical-failure-found-may-not-reopen-months>

Patrick Anderson / Providence Journal / December 12

**Washington Bridge closure sends RI officials scrambling, commuters gridlocked**

PROVIDENCE – As he went about his work on Friday, a "young" as yet unnamed engineer working on the reconstruction of the Route 195 Washington Bridge noticed something unusual in the steel holding up the span. He called over a supervisor and three days later on Monday afternoon the highway used by 90,000 drivers to cross the Seekonk River each day was suddenly closed, gridlocking the Providence metro area and severing the key connection between the east and west halves of the state.

<https://www.providencejournal.com/story/news/traffic/2023/12/12/washington-bridge-here-what-went-wrong-and-how-the-dot-will-fix-it/71894582007/>

WBZ News Staff / CBS News Boston / December 12

**"Critical failure" closes I-195 west on Washington Bridge in Providence, Rhode Island**

PROVIDENCE, RI - Massachusetts drivers traveling towards Rhode Island are being warned to anticipate delays due to the closure of the westbound lanes of I-195 on the Washington Bridge in Providence. It could take months until the bridge is reopened. RIDOT said the westbound lanes on the bridge were closed Monday due to the "critical failure of some bridge components." The areas needing repair are part of the original Washington Bridge which was built in 1968. All westbound traffic on I-195 is being diverted to alternate routes.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/boston/news/westbound-i-195-washington-bridge-rhode-island-closed/>

NBC 10 NEWS / WJAR / December 11

**Rhode Island Department of Transportation announces closure of Washington Bridge westbound**

(WJAR) — The Rhode Island Department of Transportation announced they will be closing the westbound side of the Washington Bridge. Officials said the closure is due to a "critical failure of some original bridge components." The department said the closure will be immediate.

<https://turnto10.com/news/local/rhode-island-department-of-transportation-to-announce-i-195-west-closure-southern-new-england-december-11-2023>



  **Press Releases**

## Press Releases

### Press Release: RIDOT Posts RFP for Washington Bridge Replacement Project

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) today posted a request for proposal (RFP) to invite design-build teams to submit proposals to replace the Washington Bridge. It is live for review by interested bidders at this web page (<https://webprocure.proactiscloud.com/wp-web-public/en/#/bidboard/bid/123894?customerid=46>).

The RFP highly encourages the use of accelerated bridge construction methods to replace the bridge and open travel lanes to the public as quickly as possible. It includes requirements such as carrying five through lanes over the bridge and constructing a new on-ramp to I-195 West from Gano Street and an off-ramp from I-195 West to Waterfront Drive. The project also includes paving, repair and replacement of drainage structures, and removal of the crossover traffic pattern as lanes are built and opened on the new bridge.

Final proposals to the RFP are due July 3, with interim submission requirements prior to this. The project is scheduled to be awarded and a notice to proceed issued by late July.

The RFP provides incentives up to a maximum of \$10 million based on per-day rates – ranging from \$5,000 per day to \$70,000 per day – for opening lanes to traffic in advance of the substantial completion date of August 2026. The more lanes opened for both eastbound and westbound traffic, the higher per-day rate the selected design-build team can earn. RIDOT will include disincentives of \$30,000 per day for exceeding the completion date.

Further details on all submission deadlines, as well as the incentive program, are contained in the RFP.

To further incentivize companies to submit proposals, the state will provide a stipend of \$500,000 to the second and third runner-up bidding teams.

The RFP submissions will be evaluated and awarded based on best value to the state, a combination of the bidders' cost and technical proposals. Scoring of the submissions will be prioritized based on schedule, meaning teams with proposals to complete the work in the earliest timeframe will score higher when the state evaluates the proposals.

## Related links

## ONLINE SERVICES

Solicitation # TRFP24004195 (<https://webprocure.proactiscloud.com/public/en/#/bidboard/bid/123894?customerid=46>)

**Department or agency:** Department of Transportation

**Online:** <http://www.dot.ri.gov> (<http://www.dot.ri.gov>)

**Release date:** 04-30-2024

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## Press Releases

### Press Release: RIDOT Posts RFP for Washington Bridge Demolition Project

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation today posted a request for proposal (RFP) for the demolition project for the Washington Bridge. It is live for review by interested bidders at this web page (<https://webprocure.proactiscloud.com/wp-web-public/#/bidboard/bid/123873?customerid=46>).

The RFP invites design-build teams to submit proposals to remove the bridge superstructure. The demolition process is divided into four groups. Each group includes different sections of the bridge – the Gano Street spans, the west end of the bridge, the east cantilever spans, and the east end of the bridge – and has a required milestone date for completion. The final milestone date for completion of the entire project is scheduled for March 2025.

This manner of demolition allows for the safe removal of the bridge and will not have any impacts on the adjacent eastbound bridge. There are provisions for per-day rates for incentives for finishing before the milestone dates and disincentives for finishing after the dates. A maximum of \$3 million is available to the selected design-build team for early completion. Likewise the design-build team would face up to \$3 million in disincentives if it exceeds the end dates.

To further incentivize companies to submit proposals, the state will provide a stipend of \$100,000 to the second and third runner-up bidding teams.

The RFP submissions will be evaluated and awarded based on best value to the state, a combination of the bidders' cost and technical proposals. Scoring of the submissions will be prioritized based on schedule, meaning teams with proposals to complete the work in the earliest timeframe will score higher when the state evaluates the proposals.

Final proposals to the RFP are due June 21, with interim submission requirements prior to this. The project is scheduled to be awarded and a notice to proceed issued by mid-July.

Further details on all submission deadlines, as well as the incentive program, are contained in the RFP.

## Related links

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Solicitation # TRFP24004167 (<https://webprocure.proactiscloud.com/wp-web-public/en/#/bidboard/bid/123765?customerid=46>)

**Department or agency:** Department of Transportation

**Online:** <http://www.dot.ri.gov> (<http://www.dot.ri.gov>)

**Release date:** 04-26-2024

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## Press Releases

### Travel Advisory: RIDOT Scheduled to Mill and Pave I-195 at the Washington Bridge Starting Sunday Night, April 21

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) is scheduled to address the current riding surface on I-195 at the Washington Bridge by milling then paving starting Sunday night, April 21 at 9 p.m. and going into next week.

Motorists should anticipate alternating lane closures for this overnight operation Sunday-Friday nights from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. on both directions of I-195 through the crossover from South Main Street to the Washington Bridge, starting with the eastbound lanes, followed by the westbound lanes.

All work is weather dependent and subject to change.

## Related links

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**Department or agency:** Department of Transportation

**Online:** <http://www.dot.ri.gov> (<http://www.dot.ri.gov>)

**Release date:** 04-20-2024

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## Press Releases

### Press Release: Final RFP Posted for Washington Bridge Replacement Project

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) today posted the final version of the request for proposal (RFP) for the Washington Bridge Replacement Project. It can be viewed as an addendum on the procurement webpage for the RFP.

The initial RFP in December required the companies and RIDOT to provide comments and questions regarding the provisions of the RFP and to work together to clarify the terms and conditions required from the companies' in their responses to the RFP. RIDOT met with each of those companies to discuss their feedback. The final version of the RFP issued today includes changes that were mostly incidences of clarified language and better articulation of the responsibilities of each entity in the final agreements.

The issuance of this final version of the RFP today is accordance with the previously announced procurement schedule. It keeps RIDOT and the competing design-build teams on schedule to complete the review of technical proposals and for the state to make an award by June 6. At that date, the final project cost, schedule, and scope will be defined.

## Related links

Procurement Webpage (<https://webprocure.proactiscloud.com/wp-web-public/en/#/bidboard/bid/131816?customerid=46>)

**Department or agency:** Department of Transportation

**Online:** <http://www.dot.ri.gov> (<http://www.dot.ri.gov>)

**Release date:** 01-24-2025

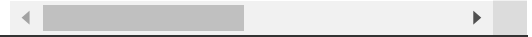
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# New Initial RFP Released for Washington Bridge Rebuild Project

*Published on Wednesday, December 18, 2024*

**PROVIDENCE, RI** — Governor Dan McKee today announced that the new initial Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Washington Bridge Replacement Project is now live. The initial RFP includes changes to produce strong, well-defined proposals with innovative solutions for building the new Washington Bridge.

Following the issuance of the new initial RFP, the bidders will have the opportunity to provide comments for the Rhode Island Department of Transportation's (RIDOT) consideration. The final RFP will be issued on January 24.

"Rhode Island remains committed to building a new Washington Bridge that has a state-of-the-art design, improves traffic flow and, most importantly, is built in a way where we can easily and comprehensively monitor its health over its long lifespan," said **Governor Dan McKee**. "The State looks forward to seeing the innovative proposals from the two highly qualified design-build teams competing for this project."

Proposals to the final RFP will be submitted by the two highly qualified design-build teams - Walsh Construction Company II, LLC and the joint venture of American Bridge Company and MLJ Contracting Corporation - that were identified through the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process last week. The final RFP submissions will be evaluated and awarded based on the best value to the state, a combination of the bidders' cost and technical proposals. The scoring also weighs the overall use of innovation, quality control, and traffic impacts in the design-build teams' proposals.

The new initial RFP incorporates many changes suggested by the 11 major companies that participated in the Request for Information (RFI) process. The new initial RFP includes:

- **Additional Engagement Opportunities:** The new initial RFP provides more opportunities for the exchange of information and ideas between the bidders and RIDOT during the procurement process. This allows for additional flexibility for innovative proposals and ensures the requirements are clear for both companies before they compete for the final award.
- **Stipend Adjusted:** The stipend for the unsuccessful bidder was adjusted from \$500,000 to \$1.75 million. It is important to note that because there are only two bidders competing in this procurement, there will be only one company eligible for the stipend. In the previous RFP, the stipend would have been available to each unsuccessful bidder. Additionally, payment of the stipend gives RIDOT owner-

ship of the ideas and concepts contained in the proposal, which could be utilized as part of the final project.

- **Liquidated Damages Adjusted:** Liquidated damages were adjusted from \$30,000 a day to \$25,000 per day, holding the bidders accountable for completing the bridge on the timeline that they contractually agree to.
- **Completion Date Modified:** In the new initial RFP, the completion date is dependent on the outcome of the bidding process, based on the design-build teams' design concept and approach.
- **Removal of Substructure Demolition:** The removal of the old bridge substructure is no longer part of the procurement for the rebuild project. Instead, it will be completed by the existing demolition contractor. Eliminating the potential requirement to replace the substructure from the reconstruction solicitation reduces bidder uncertainty, ensuring fair competition on a level playing field.
- **Additional Information Provided to Bidders:** RIDOT is providing additional studies on subsurface and underwater conditions to the design-build teams, providing more clarity regarding the necessary permits and equipping the bidders with critical information needed for design.

The new initial RFP encourages the use of accelerated bridge construction methods to replace the bridge and open travel lanes to the public as quickly as possible. It includes requirements such as carrying five through lanes over the bridge and constructing a new on-ramp to I-195 West from Gano Street and an off-ramp from I-195 West to Waterfront Drive. The project also includes paving, repair, and replacement of drainage structures, and removal of the crossover traffic pattern as lanes are built and opened on the new bridge.

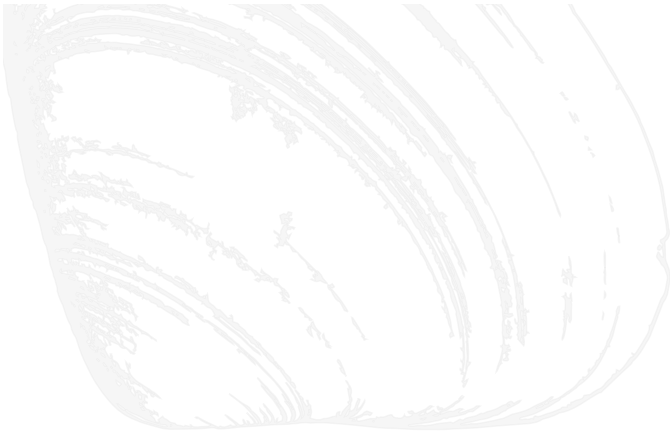
The incentives in the new initial RFP are unchanged from the previous RFP. It provides incentives up to a maximum of \$10 million based on per-day rates – ranging from \$5,000 per day to \$70,000 per day – for opening lanes to traffic in advance of the substantial completion date as determined by the winning design-build team. The more lanes opened for both eastbound and westbound traffic, the higher per-day rate the selected design-build team can earn.

The full procurement schedule is published in the RFP, outlining 15 milestones for the project procurement. Highlights include:

- **December 18, 2024:** Issuance of the initial RFP
- **January 24, 2025:** Issuance of the final RFP
- **Late January 2025 – Early April 2025:** Review of alternative technical concepts from each design-build team.
- **May 16, 2025:** Technical proposals due
- **May 30, 2025:** Price proposals due
- **June 6, 2025:** Tentative award
- **July 15, 2025:** Notice to proceed given to begin work

RIDOT remains on track to issue a tentative award to the winning design-build team in early June 2025 and a notice to proceed with work by mid-July 2025. Once the winning company is notified, they will begin work immediately. Initial tasks include finalizing the design, obtaining permits, and staging equip-

ment. The commencement of work in the field will be determined by the schedule provided by the winning design-build team at the time of the award.





STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

Governor Dan McKee

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# Governor McKee Announces Finalists for Washington Bridge Rebuild Project

*Published on Tuesday, December 10, 2024*

**PROVIDENCE, RI** – Governor Dan McKee today announced the shortlist of two highly qualified design-build teams selected as part of the request for qualifications (RFQ) process for the replacement of the westbound Washington Bridge. The companies will proceed to the request for proposal (RFP) phase of the procurement and compete for the contract to build the new bridge.

The two design-build teams – Walsh Construction Company II, LLC and the joint venture of American Bridge Company and MLJ Contracting Corporation – have hundreds of years of combined experience in completing large bridge projects both nationally and internationally.

“Since March 14 when it was determined the Washington Bridge must be rebuilt, we've continued to make progress toward ensuring Rhode Islanders have a bridge that will outlast our lifetimes,” said **Governor Dan McKee**. “With the selection of two highly qualified construction teams to compete for the rebuild project, I am pleased to see progress continue.”

The next step in the procurement process will be the issuance of the initial RFP, expected on December 18. The two design-build teams will review and provide comments on the initial RFP, with a final version to be issued on January 24. The companies will then develop their proposals in response to the final RFP.

Final technical proposals are due in mid-May followed by cost proposals, which are due in late May. The State will make a tentative award to one design-build team on June 6 with a final notice to proceed on July 15.

With the notice to proceed, the winning team will begin work including finalizing the design, obtaining permits, and staging equipment. The commencement of work in the field will be determined by the schedule provided by the winning design-build team at the time of the award.

As the procurement advances, the bridge demolition contractor is set to complete the removal of the old bridge's superstructure by February 21. Work on the demolition of the substructure will begin in February and conclude by the end of 2025.

Please click [here](#) for a copy of the Governor's prepared remarks.



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Washington Bridge Demolition Resumes, New Procurement Opens for Bridge Reconstruction

# Washington Bridge Demolition Resumes, New Procurement Opens for Bridge Reconstruction

*Published on Tuesday, October 15, 2024*

*McKee Administration Provides Key Updates on the Washington Bridge Project*

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**PROVIDENCE, RI** – Governor Dan McKee and the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) today announced key updates on the Washington Bridge project: demolition has resumed, demolition of the substructure has been moved up to ensure a more timely and efficient continuity of work, and a new procurement for the reconstruction opens today.

“My priority is to make sure we’re doing everything we can to get a new bridge built as soon as we can — all while keeping Rhode Islanders safe,” said **Governor Dan McKee**. “We know that ensuring this complex project is done right will take time, but it is encouraging to see demolition resuming and the new procurement for the rebuild moving forward.”

## **Demolition resumes, demolition of substructure moved up**

This morning, **demolition of the Washington Bridge resumed** with crews working on the shoring towers on the East Providence side of the bridge. Necessary nighttime demolition that involves louder work such as jackhammering will not begin until Sunday, after the community is updated during a [public meeting which is scheduled for Thursday, October 17 at 6:00 p.m.](#)

Additionally, as a direct result of feedback received from the industry during the Request for Information (RFI) process, the State also announced that the **demolition of the substructure will be moved up to February 2025 and completed as part of the active demolition contract**. Moving the demolition of the substructure from the upcoming reconstruction project to the active demolition project will ensure a more timely and efficient continuity of work as crews and equipment are already mobilized at the site. This will prevent additional time and costs associated with bidding out the contract and remobilizing. This update also removes a level of uncertainty for potential reconstruction bidders, helping ensure the new procurement attracts qualified bids.

## **New reconstruction procurement opens**

Today, the State will **open a new two-step procurement for the Washington Bridge reconstruction project**. The two-step procurement, preferred by the majority of companies that participated in the RFI, begins with the State issuing a **Request for Qualifications**, a solicitation that asks interested bidders to

submit key criteria, such as experience in complex construction projects and qualifications of key staff.

The RFQ will result in a shortlist of two qualified design-build companies that will move on to step two of the procurement, the Request for Proposals (RFP). The two-step procurement is designed to minimize risk to the State and the bidders by narrowing the field down to two highly qualified and interested companies early in the procurement process which also helps ensure that the companies that bid are best able to undertake the work. The RFQ opens today, October 15, and the shortlist will be announced on December 11.

Once the two shortlisted companies are selected, the process will move forward as follows:

- The shortlisted companies will have an opportunity to review and provide feedback on an RFP issued by RIDOT.
- If RIDOT determines that the feedback received will result in better proposals from the companies (particularly in terms of time and cost), the feedback will be incorporated into an addendum to the RFP and posted on January 24, 2025.
- The shortlisted companies will each submit a technical and cost proposal in response to the RFP with a tentative award to be made on June 6, 2025.

To encourage participation in the RFP, RIDOT will offer an increased \$1.75 million stipend to the unsuccessful shortlisted company to help cover the costs associated with crafting their technical and cost proposal. The RFI process showed that companies are often discouraged from advancing to the technical and cost proposal stage on such a complex project due to the significant costs associated with drafting a proposal.

  **Press Releases**

## Press Releases

### Travel Advisory Update: RIDOT to Resume Temporary Road Closures for Washington Bridge Demolition

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) today announced it will resume temporary road closures in Providence and East Providence in connection with the resumption of bridge deck and beam demolition of the old Washington Bridge.

Effective Tuesday, October 15 at 7 p.m., RIDOT will close a section of Waterfront Drive in East Providence at the I-195 overpass for this work. The closure will be in place for approximately one week. During that time, drivers will be directed to follow a short detour using Valley Street, which runs parallel to Waterfront Drive. Motorists should be aware that a short section of Valley Street will have a gravel riding surface.

Starting Tuesday, October 15 at 9 p.m., RIDOT will close a section of Gano Street in Providence at the I-195 overpass. Necessary overnight deck hammering is expected to last three nights then shift to daytime work. Nightly closures of Gano Street will still be necessary, Sunday through Thursday nights from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. for other demolition activities. Later in October, RIDOT may potentially need to schedule a full weekend closure of Gano Street for beam removal. Once this schedule is confirmed, RIDOT will provide additional information.

Whenever Gano Street is closed, drivers will follow a signed detour using India Street, Wickenden Street and South Main Street and South Water Street. The on-ramp to I-195 West at Gano Street will remain open.

All construction projects are subject to changes in schedule and scope depending on needs, circumstances, findings and weather.

## Related links

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**Department or agency:** Department of Transportation

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# Governor McKee, State Police Promote Safe Travel Across Washington Bridge

*Published on Friday, April 19, 2024*

**PROVIDENCE, RI** – Today, Governor Dan McKee was joined by Senior Deputy Chief of Staff Joseph Almond, Rhode Island State Police (RISP) Superintendent Colonel Darnell Weaver, and Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) Director Peter Alviti to promote safe travel practices in advance of the Saturday’s change to three lanes on the westbound side of the Washington Bridge.

Pointing to an increase in accidents on I-195 in the months immediately following the bridge failure, Governor McKee made clear his goal to reduce the number of accidents occurring on the Washington Bridge. The Governor is encouraging travelers to follow the reduced speed limit of 40 miles an hour, avoid switching lanes, and most importantly, stay alert and off cell phones.

“Our goal is to keep Rhode Islanders safe and get them where they need to go with the least amount of delay possible,” **said Governor Dan McKee.** “We know that in order to do both of those things successfully, we must all work together to reduce the number of accidents on the Washington Bridge, particularly those caused by distracted driving.”

“It’s tempting when you are sitting in traffic to take out that cell phone to check your texts. But it means you aren’t paying attention to your surroundings, and it means you are more likely to cause an accident that not only affects you, but the many hundreds of cars around you,” **the Governor added.**

In addition to increased safety signage on the bridge and PSA messaging, RISP has an increased presence on the bridge to help address distracted driving and prevent accidents.

**Colonel Weaver** spoke about the impact of distracted driving, saying, “Not only does distracted driving increase the likelihood of crashes, but it also reduces reaction times, impairs judgment and compromises situational awareness.”

This expanded effort to reduce accidents on the bridge comes after the state has taken steps to reduce the time to clear accidents on the bridge, so traffic snarls are alleviated sooner. Since the State began staging tow trucks along the route and ramping up its police presence on the bridge, the time to clear on the bridge has dropped from 30 minutes to 21 minutes.

The addition of a third lane on the westbound side of the Washington Bridge should shorten the time it takes to cross the bridge and ease some of the congestion in the surrounding towns. It may also reduce the number of accidents by eliminating some of the choke points where drivers have had to merge from three to two lanes.

This comes a little more than a week after RIDOT added a third lane to the eastbound side of the bridge. RIDOT, along with traffic engineering and structural engineering consultants and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) traffic experts, has certified that the bridge structure is sufficient to carry the extra lanes.

Beginning at 9 p.m. on Friday, April 19, RIDOT will begin with changing the traffic pattern on I-195 East to provide three lanes of through travel on the Washington Bridge. RIDOT will restripe the highway during the evening and overnight hours, with change complete by 9 a.m. on Saturday, April 20.

The lanes on the westbound side will be reduced in width, just as the lanes on the eastbound side had been reduce in width last week. The left and center lanes will be 10 feet wide, and trucks will be restricted to the far-right lane, which will be 11 feet wide. RIDOT will post signage that trucks must use the far-right lane only.

It is important to note that because additional repaving and subsequent restriping are needed to improve the surface of the bridge, overnight work will be temporarily reducing the number of travel lanes between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m. for the first two weeks of the latest lane change.

Travelers looking to anticipate their travel time across the bridge can see average travel times for a number of different routes, depending on the time of day, by visiting [www.washington-bridge.com](http://www.washington-bridge.com) [[zk8ngbyab.cc.rs6.net](http://zk8ngbyab.cc.rs6.net)] .

## Washington Bridge Demolition Project

### WASHINGTON BRIDGE | 2ND VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETING

#### Demolition Data Docs

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**Noise Data to Date from Overnight Construction 9pm – 6am. for the Washington Bridge**

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**Dust Data to Date from Overnight Construction 9pm – 6am. for the Washington Bridge**

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#### 2nd Virtual Public Meeting

2nd Virtual Public Meeting - Washington Bridge Demolition Project



**[Click Here to Read the Transcript of Questions and Answers from October 17, 2024 Virtual Meeting](#)**

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**[Click here to view the video of the Friday, October 11 Washington Bridge Demolition Public Meeting](#)**

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Travel Time Info & Reports

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Project Updates

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Monthly Reports

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Press Releases

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Inspection Reports

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Additional Information & Documents

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FAQs

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Helpful Links

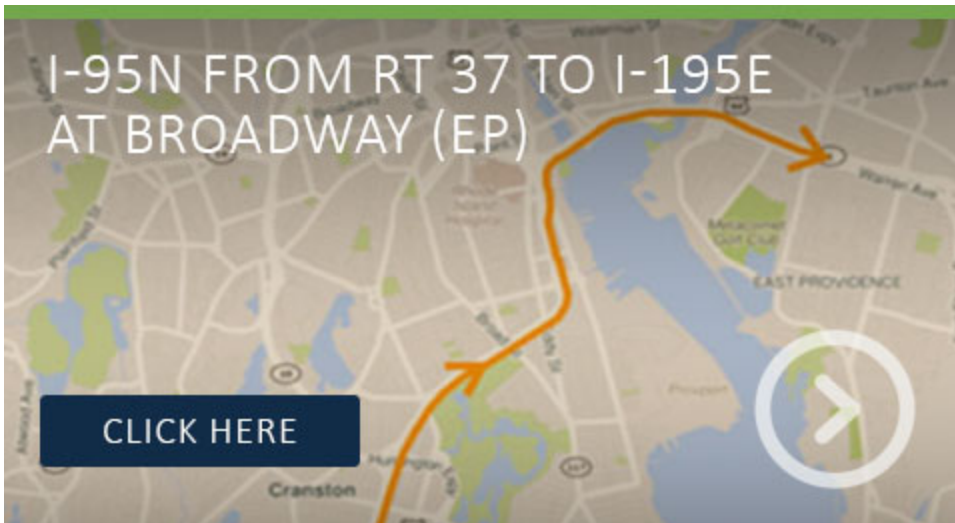
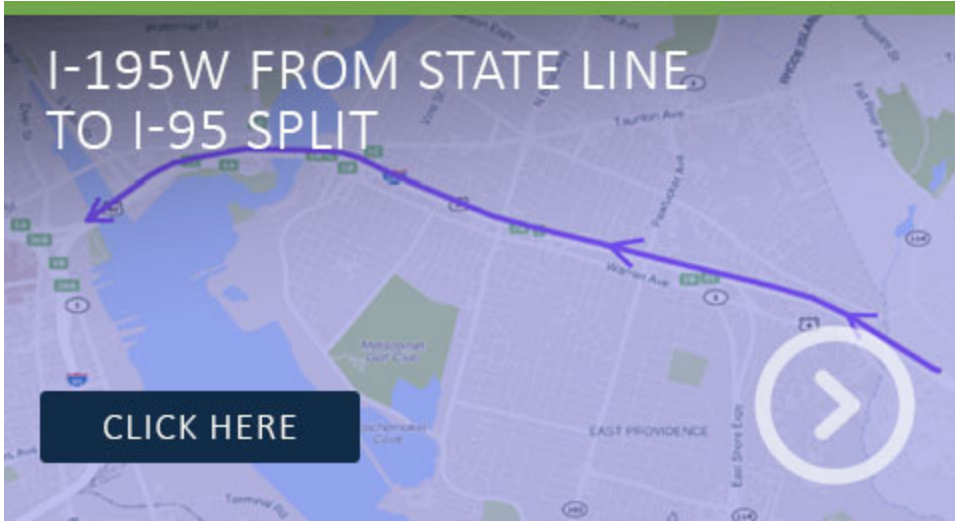
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## Travel Time Charts

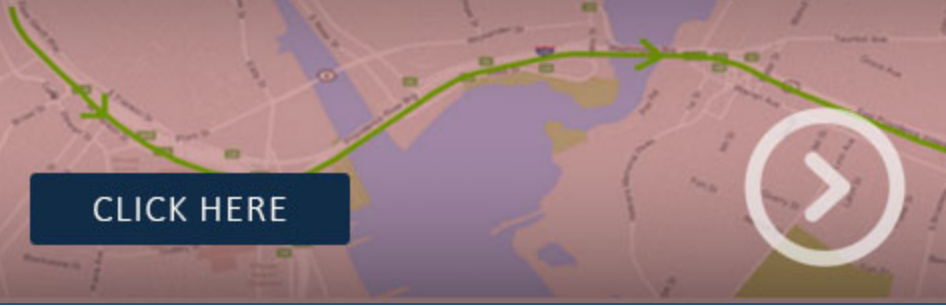
*A Message from Rhode Island Governor Dan McKee: We apologize for the disruption that many Rhode Islanders are experiencing as a result of the Washington Bridge closure. These charts are an additional tool to help residents anticipate and plan for the added drive time on different days of the week at different times of the day. I thank you for your continued patience. Together, we will fix the bridge, we will do it right and we will keep Rhode Islanders safe.*

**HOW TO USE:** For each of the nine travel routes highlighted below, RIDOT has provided three helpful charts. The first chart shows the additional time needed to cross the bridge at different hours on different days, compared to early December. Please note that travel times vary for a number of unplanned factors, including weather conditions and accidents.

The “Current Conditions” chart compares this week’s travel times to last week’s and is updated every weekday. The third chart provides the travel times for the week prior to the bridge’s closure in early December.

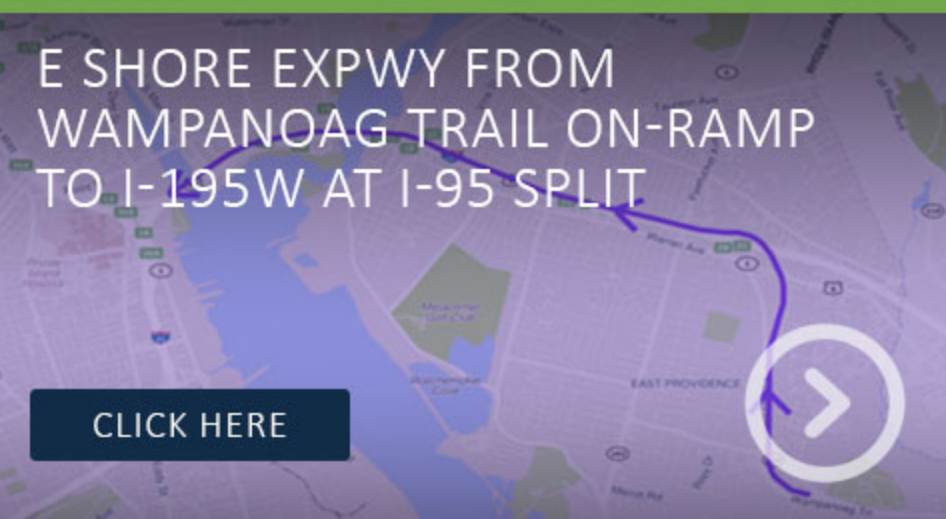


I-95S FROM ATWELLS AVE  
TO I-195E AT BROADWAY (EP)



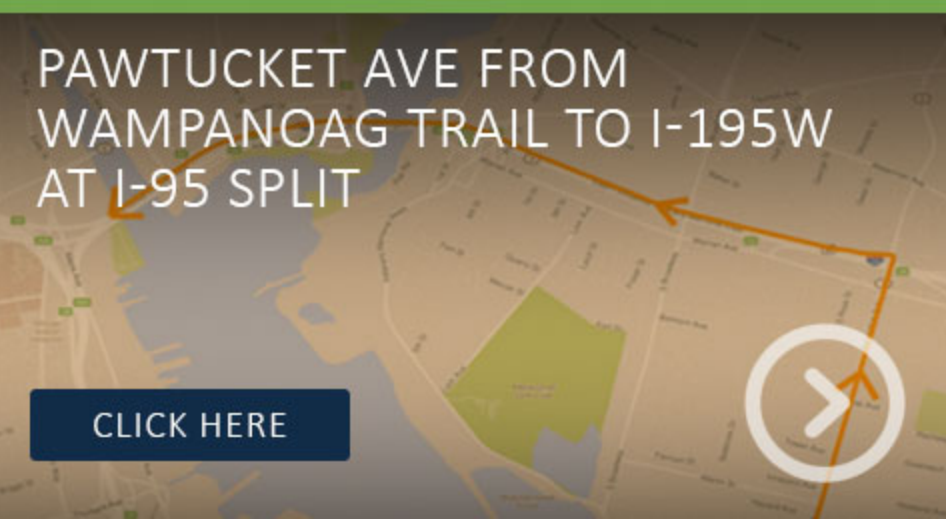
[CLICK HERE](#)

E SHORE EXPWY FROM  
WAMPANOAG TRAIL ON-RAMP  
TO I-195W AT I-95 SPLIT



[CLICK HERE](#)

PAWTUCKET AVE FROM  
WAMPANOAG TRAIL TO I-195W  
AT I-95 SPLIT



[CLICK HERE](#)

PAWTUCKET AVE FROM  
WATERMAN AVE TO I-195W  
AT I-95 SPLIT

CLICK HERE



BROADWAY (EP) FROM  
VETERANS MEMORIAL PKWY  
TO I-195W AT I-95 SPLIT

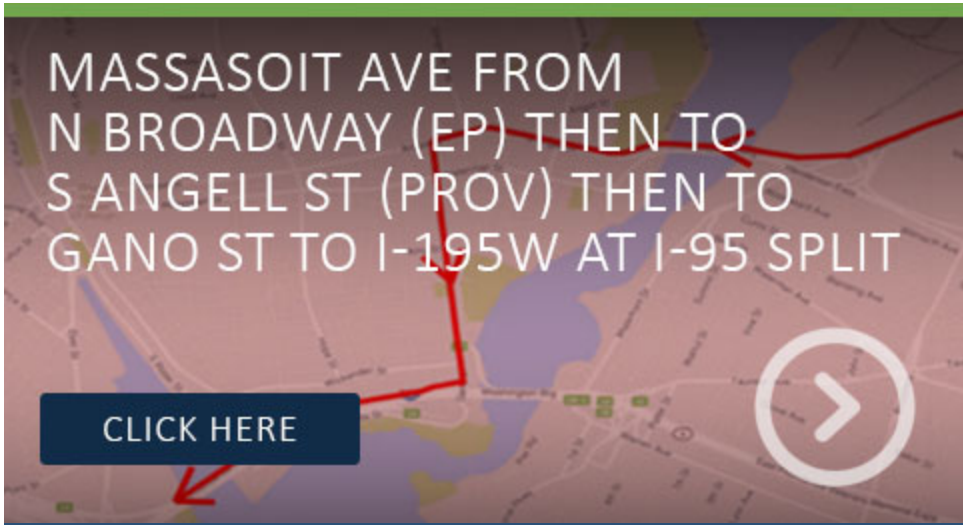
CLICK HERE



BROADWAY (EP) FROM  
745 BROADWAY TO I-195W  
AT I-95 SPLIT

CLICK HERE





## Travel Reports

The following charts provide travel time information over the prior month, compared to the same date range one year ago, prior to the bridge closure as well as traffic volume on the bridge. Travel Reports are updated weekly.





On Wednesday, February 19, RIDOT concluded the superstructure demolition phase of the old Washington Bridge. The contractor will begin preparing for substructure demolition, starting next week.

This work will initially focus on elements of the substructure on land on the East Providence and Providence sides of the river, beginning with the East Providence side. Demolition crews will use construction hammers to break up the old bridge components. The controlled demolition drops used recently for the superstructure will not be used during substructure demolition. This work will be done during the daytime hours only; no overnight hammering.

Demolition of substructure elements over water is expected to begin in the spring. RIDOT remains on schedule to complete the demolition of the bridge's substructure by the end of the year.

For other planned activities on I-195, motorists can expect up to two lanes of travel closed on both I-195 East and I-195 West before and after the Providence River Bridge for bridge preservation work, Sunday-Thursday nights, February 23-27, from 9 p.m. to 4 a.m.

In a little over a week, travelers should also anticipate overnight right and center lane closures on I-195 East on the Washington Bridge, Sunday-Thursday nights, March 2-6, from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m., for installation of electrical cables and/or equipment associated with the Structural Health Monitoring (SHM) system.

*All of this work is part of our ongoing effort to have a high level of maintenance on this bridge. We are doing work proactively to provide a measure of safety.*

*[Click here for project update archives](#)*

# Washington Bridge Monthly Snapshot Report

In accordance with legislation passed into law on May 7, 2024, RIDOT has submitted the first of 28 monthly Washington Bridge Snapshot Reports, based on expected completion of the project by August 2026. Each report will include a rolling 4-week period defined as the last week of the prior month and three weeks of the current month. The full text of the report is below. Reports will be posted to the RIDOT website on or before the first of each month.

## WASHINGTON BRIDGE SNAPSHOT REPORT

[CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD REPORT](#)



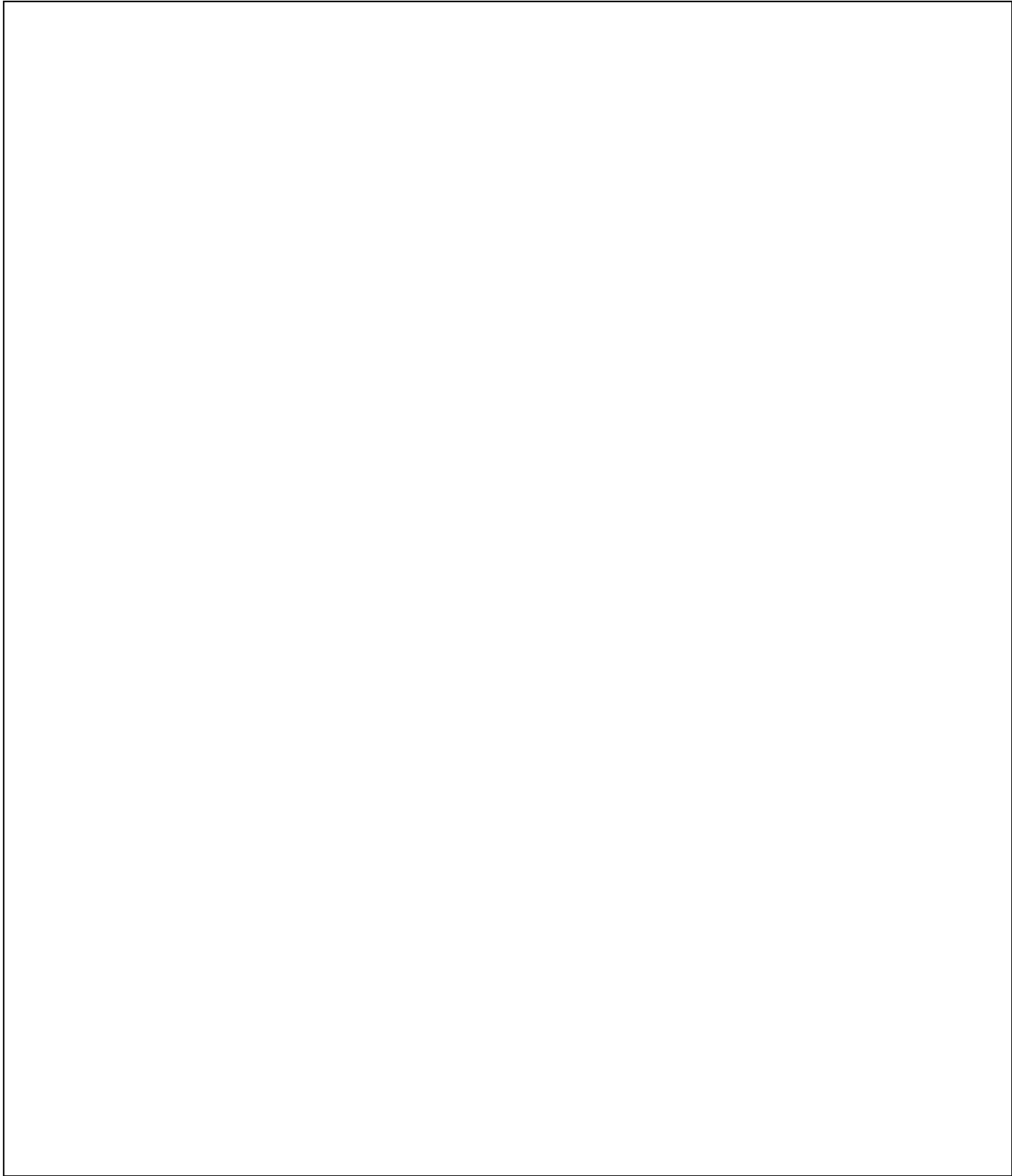
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March 1, 2025 - Washington Bridge Snapshot Report - Oversight Committee attachments

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[Previous Reports](#)

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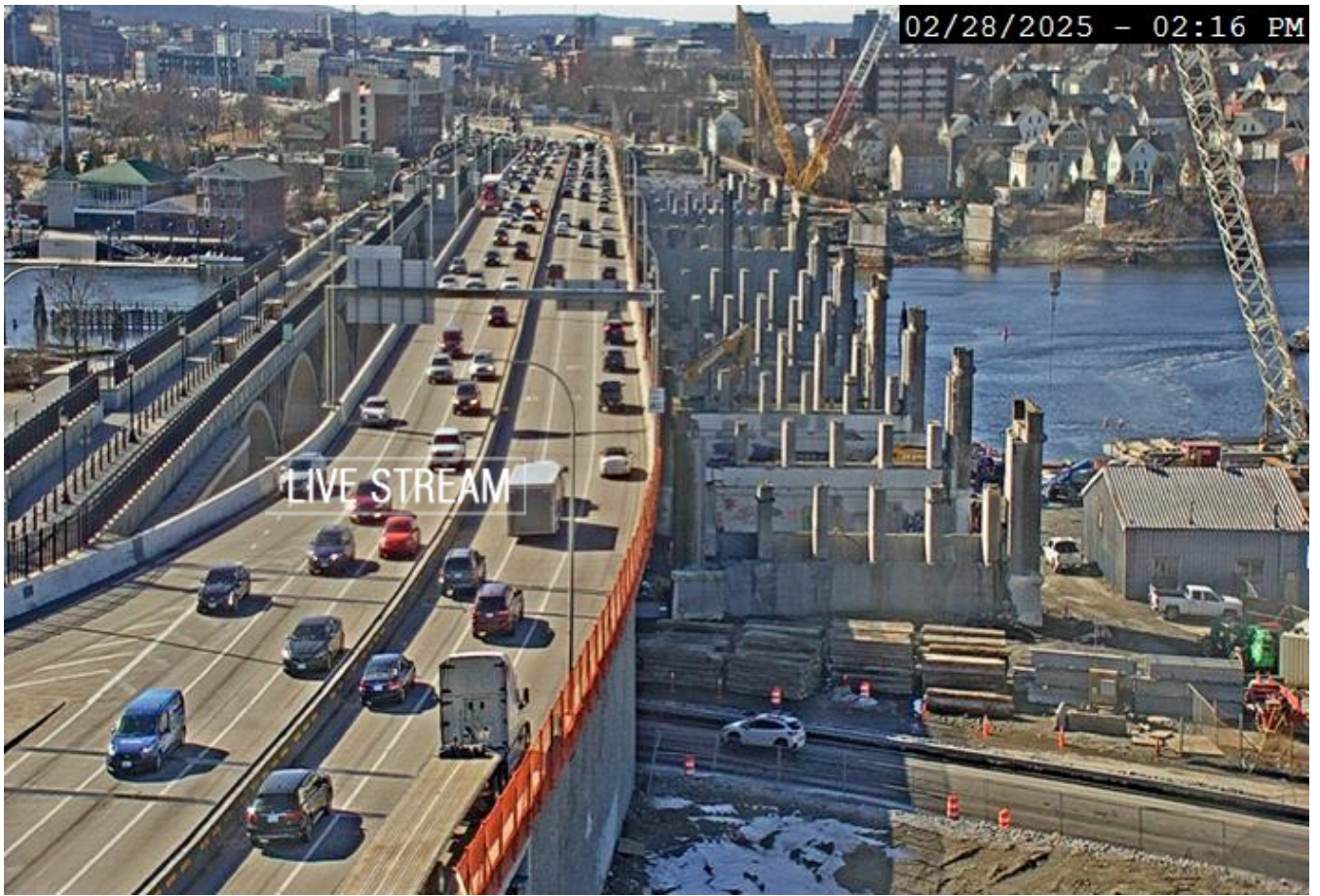
***View Full Screen Dashboard***

**Washington Bridge Live Cams**

02/28/2025 - 02:16 PM



Exit 2B (Route 114)



Washington Bridge



Exit 1D (Gano Street)

## Press Releases

Press Release: Final RFP Posted for Washington Bridge Replacement Project

New Initial RFP Released for Washington Bridge Rebuild Project

Governor McKee Announces Finalists for Washington Bridge Rebuild Project

Washington Bridge Demolition Resumes, New Procurement Opens for Bridge Reconstruction

Travel Advisory Update: RIDOT to Resume Temporary Road Closures for Washington Bridge Demolition

Travel Advisory: RIDOT to Begin Temporary Closure of Waterfront Drive at I-195 Overpass in East Providence for Washington Bridge Deck and Beam Demolition

Press Release: RIDOT Posts RFP for Washington Bridge Replacement Project

Press Release: RIDOT Posts RFP for Washington Bridge Demolition Project

Travel Advisory: RIDOT Scheduled to Mill and Pave I-195 at the Washington Bridge Starting Sunday Night, April 21

Press Release: Governor McKee, State Police Promote Safe Travel Across Washington Bridge

Travel Advisory: I-195 Eastbound 3-Lane Configuration to Begin for Morning Commute on April 10

Travel Advisory: Crossover to East Side of Washington Bridge to Shift

Governor McKee Announces Plans For Third Travel Lane for I-195 Approaching The Washington Bridge

Travel Advisory: RIDOT to Test New Traffic Pattern to Ease Traffic on I-195 West

Press Release: RIDOT Opens I-195 West Bypass Lanes

Press Release: McKee Administration Update on Washington Bridge Response 12-13

Press Release: McKee Administration Update on Washington Bridge Response 12-12

Press Release: RIDOT Closes Washington Bridge Westbound 12-11

## Inspection Reports & Photos

### Washington Bridge North (Westbound) Reports

[2015 Inspection Report](#)

[2015 Inspection Photos](#)

[2016 Inspection Report](#)

[2016 Inspection Photos](#)

[2017 Inspection Report](#)

[2017 Inspection Photos](#)

[2018 Inspection Report](#)

[2018 Inspection Photos](#)

[2019 Inspection Report](#)

[2019 Inspection Photos](#)

[2020 Inspection Report](#)

[2020 Inspection Photos](#)

[2021 Inspection Report](#)

[2021 Inspection Photos](#)

[2022 Inspection Report](#)

[2022 Inspection Photos](#)

[2023 Inspection Report](#)

[2023 Inspection Photos](#)

### Washington Bridge South (Eastbound) Reports

2009 Inspection Report

2009 Inspection Photos

2011 Inspection Report

2011 Inspection Photos

2013 Inspection Report

2013 Inspection Photos

2015 Inspection Report

2015 Inspection Photos

2017 Inspection Report

2017 Inspection Photos

2019 Inspection Report

2019 Inspection Photos

2021 Inspection Report

2021 Inspection Photos

2023 Inspection Report

2023 Inspection Photos

04-2024 Inspection Report

04-2024 Inspection Photos

11-2024 Inspection Report

11-2024 Inspection Photos

## **Additional Information & Documents**

### **Background Info**

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) closed the west bound side of the Washington Bridge due to the finding of a critical failure of some bridge components. These particular components are part of the original Washington Bridge which was built in 1968. They were uncovered during the reconstruction of the Washington Bridge.

The failing components called anchor rods were identified by RIDOT consultants during an inspection of the ongoing work but in an area that was not part of the reconstruction project. The consultant's report can be viewed [here](#). RIDOT's plan to restore the westbound side to full function is documented in the press release below. Please see maps following the press release for full detour details and instructions.

**Full Replacement of the I-195 Washington Bridge**

**MEGA Grant - Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant Opportunity**

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) is requesting \$220,980,000 in Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant (MEGA Grant) support for the \$368,300,000 Full Replacement of the I-195 Washington Bridge project.

**GRANT INFO WEBPAGE**

AI Engineers Determination Letter of November 2024 Eastbound Bridge Inspection

Washington Bridge PowerPoint Presentation - March 14, 2024

Washington Bridge Structural Analysis Findings

Washington Bridge Structural Analysis Findings - Review

Commonwealth Engineers' Approval of Adding Lanes to Eastbound Bridge

AI Engineers' Bridge Load Rating for Eastbound Bridge

FHWA Approval of Three-lane Traffic Configuration

Washington Bridge Comparison Slides – July and December 2023

## Frequently Asked Questions

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Why was the bridge closed? »

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What is the timeline for repairing or replacing the bridge? »

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How has this affected traffic? »

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Are there alternate routes you recommend? »

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How do you calculate travel times? Is it different than my GPS or Waze? »

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Where can Rhode Island businesses access information regarding the SBA loan program for the Washington Bridge emergency? »

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Has the Washington Bridge closure affected other construction projects in Rhode Island? »

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How do officials receive current information regarding the bridge? »

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## Helpful Links

State of Rhode Island, Emergency Management Agency

Providence 311 - The Mayor's Center for City Services

City of East Providence - Request for Service

Rhode Island Commerce - Emergency Business Assistance

## Sign up for updates!

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Receive Email Updates on the Washington Bridge North Project

\* **Email**

By submitting this form, you are consenting to receive marketing emails from: State of Rhode Island, Two Capitol Hill, Providence, RI, 02903, US, <http://dot.ri.gov/>. You can revoke your consent to receive emails at any time by using the SafeUnsubscribe® link, found at the bottom of every email. [Emails are serviced by Constant Contact.](#)

**Sign Up!**

## RIDOT Constituent Services

2 Capitol Hill

Providence, RI 02903

Phone: 401-222-2450

[help@ridot.net](mailto:help@ridot.net)

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# Washington Bridge Second Virtual Public Meeting

Thursday, October 17, 2024

## Questions and Responses

**Q: Who is responsible for the environmental controls for the demolition?**

A: As part of this project, the contractor is responsible for implementing controls. Those controls range from debris shielding to make sure that no debris is scattered into the neighborhood, and drains and inlets to prevent pollutants from migrating into the waterways. The contractor is also required to provide misting and spraying of concrete as it's being demolished to assure that the dust from that activity is contained and not allowed to migrate off the site.

**Q: How are you mitigating dust from the demolition?**

A: Soil cutting machines are equipped with dust mitigation systems--generally, any dust that falls on the ground that may be tracked off by vehicles, particularly construction vehicles. Anti-tracking pads are laid down for containing that kind of construction debris and dust at the work site. Drilling equipment is equipped with Hepa vacuum filters to minimize and prevent concrete dust from coming from the demolition activities.

During the last several weeks, RIDOT did get some reports from neighbors that reported dust from the project migrating onto their property. At that time, RIDOT required the contractor to implement additional control measures and additional water cannons to the demolition areas.

**Q: How will you monitor the dust in the air?**

A: RIDOT has installed a dust monitoring measurement device that will measure dust in the area of the construction to make sure that the air quality is in conformance with the 24 hour average ambient air quality. The device is recommended by the EPA.

**Q: How will you monitor vibration during the demolition?**

A: Vibration is being monitored during demolition with sensors in and around the neighborhood. All vibration levels have been within the industry standard limits for demolition.

RIDOT conducted pre-construction inspections on many of the structures close to the construction. RIDOT will also perform those same kind of inspections after construction to make sure that the construction activity did not result in any damage to nearby properties.

**Q: How will you mitigate the noise caused by the demolition?**

A: Noise mitigation is difficult. Knocking down a massive concrete structure takes heavy equipment with high impact in order to break it apart.

The good news is that the worst is over. We have only three more nights of jackhammering-related noise left: Sunday through Tuesday, October 20-22.

After those three nights, all of that heavy equipment hammering will be done during the day for the rest of the project. RIDOT will restrict that heavy hammering during the daytime shifts to between 6 a.m. in the morning and 9 p.m. at night. And, as time goes on, the activities will get further and further away from the houses as they work from the two ends inward to the middle of the waterway.

There will still be construction that will be ongoing, but it will be the regular kind of construction activity with the traditional kind of noise that comes from low impact or no impact type construction activities.

**Q: Why did RIDOT do any nighttime jackhammering?**

A: The work that we did do overnight was done purposely during the night. Our traffic engineers worked with the traffic engineer in the city to determine that the gridlock that would be created during the day by blocking vital roads would have created a terrible condition not only for people who live in the area, but also for emergency vehicles and other commuters that use that road on a daily basis.

After getting those structures down over Gano Street, the rest of the construction will be either not over roads or over water. In which case, all of those activities can be done during the day without having to worry about the gridlock that would be created from blocking traffic.

**Q: Can you relocate anyone living close to the bridge while night time jackhammering is happening?**

A: As I said, we're down to the last three days. But relocation or vibration standards are set by, highway guidelines. They would not support or participate in relocation costs for those kinds of activities.

**Q: Can RIDOT speak to evidence, reparations of employee actions that led to the bridge closure?**

A: Those questions have to do with the litigation. And I know that it's frustrating to hear that as an answer. One question about these kinds of things. But the governor hired a capable litigation team to sort out questions of liability and accountability for the Washington Bridge.

As in all pending legal matters, we will not be commenting on these issues tonight. Any inquiries regarding evidentiary or other kinds of legal matters should be directed to the legal team.

**Q: Can you build a temporary bridge over the Seekonk River? Can the Army Corps of Engineers assist?**

A: The Army Corps of Engineers takes care of navigable waterways and any obstruction of those by either falling debris or falling bridges and they will become active. With regard to the construction of the new bridge or the demolition of this bridge, the Army Corps of Engineers does not have responsibility for nor do they make it a practice of involving themselves in either demolition or reconstruction of a state-owned bridge unless it in some way is impacting on their navigable waterway. In fact, when the Army Corps of Engineers itself builds or has any of the bridges that they have jurisdiction over, they hire outside consultants to design them and contract private contractors to build for them, very much in the same way that we are conducting this project with consultants and private contractors.

**Q: Was any consideration is being given to, alternative transportation options like dedicated bus lanes, etc., etc.?**

A: The answer to that is yes, although we're not yet in the design stage. RIDOT will be looking at those alternatives and how they would impact not only future traffic, but also how they would impact the cost and the construction of the new bridge. They will all be under consideration particularly during the RFP process. And we'll be looking at long range solutions for those.

**Q: Are the existing piers and footings going to be demolished or reused?**

A: The existing piers and footings are going to be demolished. During the RFI process, we conferred with ten of the most knowledgeable and most expert bridge builders in this country, if not the world. Their answer, nearly unanimously, was that they would not have the ability to test and determine the viability of those existing footings that are over 60 years old. It is a risk that most contractors would not involve themselves with and further conversations with the FHWA affirmed that. Our experts determined that the most proper way to move forward with this is to completely demolish the existing piers and footings and to build brand new ones for the brand new bridge superstructure.

**Q: Can you speak to the aesthetics and design of the new bridge?**

A: There are historic features on the existing bridge that will be preserved once the new bridge is constructed. In terms of its construction, the actual design of it will be brought into focus during the RFP process--the procurement process with the various firms that are competing. They will be submitting a design to us when they're competing with each other, so that we can determine which of those designs are the best ones to implement.

**Q: What is the purpose of the weigh in motion systems? Do they indicate a problem with the eastbound bridge?**

A: The weigh in motion systems are being implemented to monitor vibrations and stresses and strains in the structure as a precautionary measure only. In fact, we have had the bridge inspected three different times and analyzed by two different companies to determine whether or not the existing structure is suitable to use for the duration of the time it will be used as a temporary bypass for traffic during the construction of the new bridge. They all determined that the bridge is in good health. There are no defects that we need to worry about.

This monitoring system is an insurance policy for us and you, the public, that we will be keeping a very close eye on to see if there are any changes. The system is there only to make sure we keep the bridge safe, not because we have detected any defects in it.

**Q: Has the concrete being demolished been tested for asbestos?**

A: It is a type of concrete that does not contain asbestos. There is no asbestos on the site, nor is there any presence in the concrete that we're demolishing.

**Q: Why are you rehiring a company that worked on the first bridge, given the issues that have followed?**

A: No companies have been debarred from doing work for DOT on any new bridge or road construction by any regulatory or legal authority.

The only company that has been debarred from RIDOT's construction activities is Barletta Heavy Division, which debarred themselves as part of a voluntary agreement with the Department of Justice. Other than that company, no other companies have been identified and under FHWA funding guidelines. We cannot discriminate on the basis of arbitrary debarment. In fact, every state in the country, every DOT in the country, does business on a regular basis on heavy and highway projects with companies with which they're engaged in claims or who have claims against them.

**Q: Why are we involving a company who dumped toxic soil in in a construction project in Rhode Island?**

A: We are not doing business with any companies who have involved themselves with dumping toxic soil.

**Q: Who are tonight's presenters?**

A: (Per Director Alviti) Tonight, I have Pamela Cotter, chief planner Stephen Soderlund, assistant manager of project management, and project manager David Walsh from our neighborhood relations group and other top, project related personnel.

**Q: Why weren't participants allowed to ask questions during the first meeting? Why was it held on a Friday night?**

A: I think those questions have been answered during various press conferences. The governor saw fit to schedule a second meeting tonight with you all to do precisely all of those things prior to the resumption of noisy activities at the site.

**Q: What is the timeline for demolition and has it been affected by the pause?**

A: The pause for several weeks will cause that same delay, so instead of completing the demolition of the superstructure that this contractor that we have -- our contract with now was scheduled to finish by the end of this year -- that will now extend for four weeks or five weeks beyond the date that they were originally scheduled to complete it.

However, I've been in this situation before where there have been delays, whether they be imposed or by natural causes, and they always work with the contractor to try to make up that time and still get the project done. And they are working with the contractor as we speak right now to see if there are ways to align the work between now and January, so that we could bring that schedule back a bit, and we'll keep you all posted about that.

**Q: When will the superstructure demolition take place?**

A: The change order that we issued for the additional work to demolish the piers and the substructures will take from February until December of next year. That does not mean that the construction of the new bridge will be delayed for that period, because the new contractor will be able to start their work at least six months before the demolition is completed. And they'll be able to mobilize their workforce and their equipment, to finalize their designs, to make their permit applications, to secure the environmental permitting and, to possibly begin preparing fabrication of various components. In fact, the removal of the substructure will take place sooner than if it had been made part of the construction project.

**Q: As a result, directly next to the construction site, what is being done to mediate the harmful dust as well as the impact of the jarring shaking has had on our whole structures.**

A: The answer to that is the vibration is being monitored. We have a number of vibration sensors that we have deployed through the neighborhood to make sure that the vibrations are at or below the regulatory standards. So far, they have been. We also took a survey of the area of buildings in the area to determine their condition prior to the beginning of the demolition project.

At the end of the project, we will be sending the same inspectors out to take a look at those same buildings to make sure that there is no change in each of the buildings that are nearby that may have been impacted by any vibrations. And in those cases, we'll be taking a building by building inventory of that and will be interacting with the owners of those properties to make sure that, either no damage has been done or if there has been damage that it's remediated.

In terms of the dust, we have implemented a dust measuring system that will alert us and the contractor of any instances where dust has migrated off the work site at levels in excess of the regulatory requirement. So, we're monitoring those. We will keep a very close eye. We implemented additional mitigation requirements for the contractor that they have complied with, to make sure that the dust not only is not harmful if it goes over the project limits, but doesn't get over the project limits in the first place.

**Q: When do you expect the new bridge to be done and function?**

A: The date of the construction of the new bridge is going to be determined along with how much it's going to cost and what it's going to look like. The scope schedule for its construction and the cost are all going to be determined competitively between the companies that are competing for this project, beginning with the release of the request for qualifications from contractors that are interested in bidding on this all the way to June when we make the final selection.

During that period of time, the companies will be submitting their technical proposals, what materials they're using, what they're going to cost, and how long specifically it's going to take to build it. At the end of

that process, we're going to know precisely how much it's going to cost, how long it's going to take to build it, and what the bridge is going to look like.

**Q: Has the state been able to quantify or at least estimate the overall economic cost of the bridge closure, including demolition and traffic effects.**

A: No. What is most important to us right now is the cost to rebuild the new bridge.

We will be working with several contracting companies who will be competing for the project to determine what that actual cost will be in a contract at the award in June. We'll post all of that information on our website again at Washington-bridge.com.

**Q: Who is responsible to ensure that these regulations are followed?**

A: The monitoring equipment that's being put in place is equipped to provide data for DOT to review. And, we from time to time will call DEM when we feel the need or if we feel the data indicates that there's an infraction or the company is nearing the limits, we'll bring the DEM in to take a look at the site to take a look at the activity, in order to determine what additional controls we want to put on that.

**Q: Will this air and vibration sensor data be posted anywhere publicly during the duration of the work?**

A: Yes. We're using the Washington-bridge.com website as a place that people can go and look at that data along with any other data that we have relative to the site.

**Q: There's so much cement dust on the linear park bike path. This is known for, that cyclists, including myself, are losing traction and going over that. And on the approach, to the bridge, who's responsible for maintaining, safe access of the bike paths?**

A: The bike path is our responsibility. Ultimately, it's the contractor's responsibility to keep that clear of debris and any soil or dust that's on it. We will certainly have our project managers have the contractor address that and make sure that they put in place a routine cleaning of it so that it keeps it in a clean state. The demolition activity is starting in that area and very soon will be moving out of that area. So, there will be no further interruption.

**Q: [The next one is more of a statement] asking whether the Friday's meeting was a mistake or wasn't handled well.**

A: I'll say it publicly again. Yes. I don't think it was handled well. And that's why we're going to sit here and answer all the questions that occur. We could have been a little more sensitive to the fact that it was a Jewish holiday, and we apologize for those who are offended.

**Q: Why didn't you call the Army Corps of Engineers like Baltimore leadership did when the Francis Scott Key Bridge collapsed?**

A: I know there's been a lot of comparisons to Baltimore. We've been in direct contact with procurement there and the people who are managing that project, and I have been in contact with the governor as well. I think that there are certain details here that are not particularly correct. The way that they're handling it, they're doing the best they can, as we are, projecting you know, a date that's in 2028 to actually complete. I think that they are not ahead of us, and we're comparing notes. So, if we're doing something that can be helpful to them or they're doing something that can be helpful to us, we are in collaboration and in contact with one another.

I think when you look at the situation in Baltimore, the Army Corps of Engineers were called in primarily because the bridge collapsed into a navigable waterway that was a major port for which the Corps of Engineers has jurisdiction.

So, the removal of that debris from the navigable waterway, in order to open up that channel back to commerce, is the responsibility of the Corps of Engineers. That's why they were called in there. We do not have that similar circumstance here. No debris nor bridge fell into the navigable waterway. So the Corps of Engineers do not get involved in the reconstruction of a new bridge, nor would it be feasible for them to put something like a pontoon bridge or other kind of floating bridge over the Seekonk River, because the several lanes of traffic and the type of traffic that we would have to put over that would not be sustainable on that type of structure. However, the Corps of Engineers pretty much uses the same model, and the same contractor is in the same companies that we hired to design our bridges. So, we're pretty much using the same construction methods and delivery systems that the Corps of Engineers uses for their own bridge.

**Q: When will all the demolition be completed? And why is it going to take so long from now to actually start the new construction?**

A: The demolition of the superstructure as you know had been delayed for about four weeks. While we planned on completing that on the date of January 29<sup>th</sup>, our contract to complete that will be moved forward now by the amount of time we paused the project, but no more than that. With regard to the substructure and the piers, that work will begin in February and it will be completed by December.

The contract with the new contractor to design and build the new bridge, the timeline was developed between now and June, when we're going to be interviewing these companies. They're going to be putting their technical proposals together, will be reviewing them. We'll be having discussions with all of them. And then by June we will have a company that we are going to hire to build the project, and they'll start work immediately on that. That timeline we developed again from the RFI for a project of this scope, in order to allow the companies enough time to properly identify what their design is and give us their best price proposal.

**Q: So apparently, the demolition contract has been recently amended to include demolishing the existing bridge piers down to the riverbed. I'm just wondering why? Why not leave those old piers in place, keep them six feet above the water line, and then build a new bridge that spans from bank to bank, with no new piers in the riverbed? This would avoid all the environmental complications and cost of disturbing the substantial riverbed sediments. It's only about 1000 ft from bank to bank and easily, easily spandable distance. Has this been considered, and if not, why not?**

A: All options have been considered. Again, we had 11 of the most expert companies, ten of them, multinational companies in bridge design and construction. They recommended to us the removal of those piers and those footings down to the mud level. In addition to that, the Seekonk River is a navigable waterway, and we need to remove any obstructions in the path of any vessel.

I will follow up and see if there is any merit to what you're suggesting, and we'll try to get back to you with an honest assessment of your thought.

**Q: Is there any construction or repairs, that are scheduled in the near future for the eastbound side of the bridge that may impact, you know, traffic, whether it's day or night?**

A: We have had during the last several weeks repairs and maintenance activities happening at nighttime so that we minimize or eliminate any traffic impacts except for the wee hours of the morning when there's little traffic. Usually, it's just lane closures so that what little traffic is going by there can make their way through the work zone without there being any kind of congestion or inconvenience to the public.

Those activities have included bridge joint maintenance which was contracted for long before the Washington Bridge closure. They're part of routine and occasional contracts that we put out for that are going to progress in an easterly direction across the bridge during the next several weeks, and there will be several more bridge joints that are either maintained or repaired. Bridge joints are not a structural part of a

bridge. We do not expect any closures of the bridge for that purpose. We may have lane closures overnight in order to allow crews to repair those bridge joints. And they will be doing that work entirely at night.

**Q: I have two questions. The first is about dust. I'm one of the residents who found, demolition dust on my property. And I just want to note that the issue before wasn't about the dust control measures. It was that the contractor wasn't following them. So I want to know what you all are and doing to ensure that they are complying with the dust control measures this time around.**

A: What we've done in order to clamp down on this dust control, we've required the contractor to install additional equipment. In fact, two times the amount of equipment that would normally control the dust and use it. And our folks that are out there are monitoring to make sure that the contractor is not only using the original equipment, but, the additional equipment that we made them install to make sure that the dust is contained at the worksite itself.

**Q: Why do you consider this kind of noise safe and why haven't you considered relocating people closest to the demolition site, even if it doesn't meet the FHWA standards that would allow for relocation.**

A: This is why I delayed the overnight work for a few days so that those individuals that maybe have other options would take advantage of it. I delayed the overnight work, so that we could have this discussion and then provide time frames where if individuals are being impacted or severely impacted, the ability to make other arrangements is possible.

**Q: Since we don't seem to be in as much of a rush as we were before, rather than disturbing people the entire night would really be bothersome. Would it make more sense to be shorter periods? Spread over a long period of time so that maybe we did, you know, just 2 or 3 hours earlier in the night?**

A: One of the judgments that's being made is the fact that if you did the work during the day, that would create some serious backups there. We're trying to balance.

**Q: How long are we planning on using the detour? And if we're going to go into the winter should it be paved so that you can keep it cleared?**

A: The demolition in and around Valley Street is going to be completed next week. So, we will not be going through the winter with those operations.

**Q: How will the piers, be demolished?**

A: There are regulatory controls we need to do water demolition or in water demolition since sediments might be kicked up and might change the environment and affect the existing ecosystems.

We have been in touch with the regulatory agencies that control the fish and wildlife, so that we could proceed with demolition below the waterline in all of the months except for four months out of the year. During those four months, we had to refrain from doing work below the waterline so the contractor will be demolishing the piers down to the waterline during the months that we have no restrictions above the water. For the part that happens below the water, we will do the work there in the eight months that fall on the unrestricted period, in accordance with the Fish and Wildlife regulations. So, all the work will be able to progress both above water and then down below water at the appropriate times.

**Q: Is the demolition, on budget?**

A: Yes. The delay cost will come in as a change order we expect to have worked out in about another week, and we'll be able to make public that amount.

**Q: Please describe the process of drawing up guidelines for the design of the new bridge. Will it be public input in terms of what the design looks like?**

A: The request for proposal period and process includes the contractors in the RFP. The RFP will be issued around the December time frame and will take a field of many contractors during the qualification phase. We will select the two most qualified contractors to go into the technical proposal stage at that time. The contractors will be given what we call a base technical concept, which will be a conceptual design of a bridge spanning from one shore to the other. Those contractors will then compete by bringing on their own specialists and their own design consultants to determine how they are going to propose to us to rebuild that bridge, what it's going to look like, what kind of materials are in it. Some preliminary plans will be submitted and details about special construction methods that they might want to use.

All of that will come into focus during the period between December of this year and June of next year, during which time we will be reviewing along with our experts sitting in on these review meetings with us to determine which design is the best. By June, we will have selected the best design at the best price, with the best schedule.

**Q: Will the demolition and rebuild of the bridge cause delays in other D.O.T. projects around the state?**

A: The short answer is no. The good news is that we secured funding from the federal Mega grant for approximately \$220 million. It has been very helpful and the funds that we have in place to do other projects, including close to \$250 million that we secured for bridges on Route 95, should not be impacted. Right now, we have about 65 other projects that we're doing, and they are 95% or more on time and on budget.

**Q: There was an existing construction project prior to the failure of the bridge. What happens with that project?**

A: That \$80 million project was terminated.

**Q: How are you getting in these timelines when there isn't anyone to build the bridge yet?**

A: The timelines that I've given tonight are contracts that are already in place that the contractor is responsible for meeting the cost. The contract for the construction of the new bridge will contain the required timeline that they will build it under. We will have that timeline in June at the end of the competition, when every company competing will provide us with their best schedule to complete the contract.

**Q: What is being done to address the looming problems with the aging bridge that is currently in use?**

A: Those are two different constructions. They're not the same. The eastbound bridge is only about 20 years old or less than 20 years old. It is of a modern construction, not like the one that we're tearing down. We had it inspected along with a structural assessment done that included an assessment of the additional traffic we're putting on it. All of the companies that reviewed provided us with their recommendations and said that it is adequate and it will be fine to sustain the additional load for whatever duration we need to build a new bridge.

**Q: Following coordinating with RIPTA for traffic mitigation during the demolition and reconstruction, what, if any, actions have been taken since those conversations?**

A: The conversations have not ended. We're always in discussions with RIPTA to ways that we can mitigate and improve alternate modes of travel. I serve as chairman of the board, and we've been making great strides to add additional capability on drivers and additional bus routes.

**Q: Where exactly on these vibration sensors placed in the neighborhood next to the construction site?**

A: I don't have a list of locations, nor do we want to widely publish them, because we've already had 1 or 2 of them vandalized already. But we will get in touch with this individual to discuss with them their location and where their location is relative to the nearest sensor.

**Q: How will you improve noise mitigation and scheduling in regards to the hydraulic hammering?**

A: For the three nights that we have left will be similar in nature and sound. We are monitoring the noise levels in the area to make sure that they are below, at or below the standards that were held to, but for those three nights, there will be that kind of construction. The only way for us to knock down these massive concrete structures is through the use of this kind of equipment. And this is for all the country. These kinds of similar issues are encountered all the time as DOTs have to demolish old infrastructure and place new ones, particularly in urban areas. And, there's just no easy way of doing it. The good news is we only have three more nights left.

**Q: Has an independent party been designated to be in charge of oversight, and will the public receive periodic reports?**

A: Yes, we are providing monthly reports that are public reports for the entire project. Those reports are published on a monthly basis to our website Washington-Bridge.com.

**Q: Are we done during the day for the sake of the families that live there in the area? There are many, psychotherapists in the area that are severely inhibited in the ability to work with our clients when the building is shaking and the noise is very disruptive.**

A: There are still some grants for small businesses available

**Q: How confident are you that the overnight construction will only be three nights?**

A: Well, we're making it that way. We're requiring the contractor to complete that work.

**Q: Will the RFP contain financial penalties for not meeting completion, deadlines or incentives for completing prior, to the project and, deadlines?**

A: There are incentives and disincentives to the contract. So, there are penalties if they go over their prescribed or contracted time and there are rewards if they finish sooner. The same is true for example, hundreds of contracts that we've put out for construction during the last several years. And the same will be true for the new bridge construction.

**Q: Regarding the weight in motion, Why have we not been told about the surveillance portion, the license reading cameras being installed on the bridge? And if they will not be used to catch violators, why are we paying for them?**

A: The portion of the devices that capture information that we need in order to determine and discern between two vehicles is necessary in order for that data to be meaningful to us. For example, if we detect that an overweight vehicle is on the bridge, sometimes, the detection devices will sense that as a single vehicle when actually it's two different vehicles. So visual capability is necessary to determine whether or not that was in fact an overweight circumstance or whether it was two vehicles in very close proximity that were picked up together. With regard to using that information, then to penalize, while that is a capability, we are not enabling that capability, nor are we contracting with the company to do that, to issue citations to people that are not following the law.

**Q: So while it's in the contract with, with the 2.8, 2.7, \$2.8 million contract, while it's in there as an option, you're saying you're not going to check that box, right?**

A: Exactly right. We are not exercising that option to actually create violations.

**Q: As the evidence has been collected during the pause, where is it being housed and what agency is in charge of the evidence? Is it you, the DOT you have it stored somewhere? Is it state police or the AG's office? Who's watching the evidence?**

A: The litigation team is in complete control of anything having to do with evidence, its use, or its storage. We are not involved in any of that. I don't know where it is. We have to refer all of those questions to them for that. Okay. So you know where it is, but we can't talk about it because of the law.

**Q: How can the public have input into guidelines for the design before it's sent to the companies?**

A: During the procurement process, we would not be able to have those kinds of public input because there are companies competing against each other with proprietary information. So, there's a competition and we're restricted by the procurement laws from revealing any of that proprietary information to the public. However, prior to the issuance, we have a base technical concept that our consultants develop that is given to these companies as a base technical concept, and it will be public as part of the RFP. We will be able to take comments from the public on design ideas that we can explore with the competing companies.

**Q: Any chance of a light rail path from East Providence to Providence?**

A: There's already a derelict path there in place. Right now, RIPTA is doing a light rail study. Not in that part of the state, but in another part of the state where they think that a light rail system might be deployed effectively and have the ridership.

**Q: Is there anything being done to alleviate the congestion going east? During the evening morning commutes, it seems to have gotten worse over the last two weeks.**

A: We're continuing to look at various options that may be available to create more of a bandwidth or more of a throughput of traffic and reduce congestion in the east direction.

That would be something we just can't continue to discuss in a productive way. Governor, you know that. So we got from 0 to 90% correcting it. And that last 10% is always the hardest for engineers to figure out and whether we're going to stay on it and we're going to figure things out.

**Q: What are the parameters of the air quality testing?**

A: The dust monitoring levels that we're sampling are all in compliance with EPA standards. These requirements dictate that the 24-hour average ambient air quality is 150 micrograms per cubic meter. And that's what we will monitor to make sure that they're within the EPA and our standards.

**Q: Why will there only be two bidders for the project that will receive the RFP?**

A: We are allowing as many companies who want to compete for the first phase, which is the qualification phase, and we'll narrow down the competition. In that first phase, we'll be looking at the personnel the companies have available that have expertise in this kind of bridge building. The experience of the company has itself, the qualifications of the personnel they intend on using, what kind of resources the company has, what kind of other bridges they have built, and the content of proposals. Using these qualifications, we will pick the two most qualified candidates among the applicants during the RFP process. The companies that we spoke with told us that considerable expense goes into a technical proposal. They literally have to take millions of dollars out of their pockets in order to develop a design. Companies are hesitant to expend that amount of money to enter into a competition where they're one among many other companies to expend that amount of money.

**Q: Will the people who responded to the RFI and the RFQ be public at any point in time.**

A: We're going to have our folks check with the Department of Administration, particularly their legal and in their purchasing to make sure that we get the right time frame in which that information can be released so

that we don't violate any of the purchasing laws. But we'll get that information. We'll post the answer to that question on our website, and get it back to this individual.

**Q: Why don't we have a legal team here?**

A: If we did, they wouldn't be able to answer any questions.

**Q: How many GARVEE bonds were sold to finance the new bridge? What interest rate and when do they mature?**

A: The total GARVEE that was approved by the General Assembly (GARVEE bonds for those who are listening in, are dollars that you can borrow in advance of federal dollars coming into the state) was part of our finance package that we're that we're very pleased that we're making progress on. The GARVEE bonds totaled an amount of \$348 million.

I think the interest rate was favorable. It was in the three 3% range, maybe a little slightly higher than the 3%.

I don't know whether these are 20 year or 30 years, but we'll find out. I think it was favorable conditions, and we didn't buy the whole thing anticipating that the interest rates may be coming down.

We're going to continue to pursue additional grants through this entire project. And the more grants that we get, the more we're going to displace those dollars that we would have to borrow. Our goal is to, of course, keep going until we mitigate entirely the need to use the GARVEE. If it if we need to use it, it's there as a backstop.

**Q: Does Rhode Island oversee or choose the construction companies that work on the bridge through the procurement process?**

A: We are not allowed by federal regulation to restrict the competitors that compete for these projects. We're not allowed to limit them in any way unless there are sanctions against them by a regulatory or legal authority, and we don't have any companies like that. If the competition is open, it's a level playing field for everyone, and we welcome all bidders.

**Q: Is there House and Senate oversight?**

A: Yes. We are in direct conversations with the Speaker and the Senate President on a regular basis on this issue. We also have required monthly reports to both the House and the Senate, and the oversight committees received those reports. And so we'll continue to keep them informed.

**Q: That the contractor who, originally erected the failed bridge, have they done other work? Are there other bridges with the same design being used in other areas?**

A: This is not only a unique bridge in Rhode Island, but our experts have told us that this is a most unique design even in the country. So in Rhode Island, no, we do not have any other bridges that are constructed in the same way that this works.

**Q: Can property owners near the bridge access the pre demolition survey of their property?**

A: As far as I know there was inspection of the properties to determine the before and after impact and we can provide that information to the homeowners.

**Q: Have you worked with major businesses in Rhode Island to encourage work from home options for employees affected by the bridge construction?**

A: I believe that we have accommodated that, especially during the first 90 plus days before we went to three lanes. We have ongoing conversations with the businesses, the hospitals, whether it's Fidelity or CVS, and then and I think they are accommodating the workers.

**Q: Have you had any follow up with the Secretary of Transportation since his visit?**

A: The answer is yes. Through multiple sources, I've had more than one discussion with Secretary Buttigieg on the grants and leading up to the grants. The congressional delegation has talked to the secretary along with Secretary Raimondo, and the White House.

We have gotten tremendous support from the Federal Highway Administration and their administrator. Their administrator and his staff are actually quite present in many of the meetings that we have with our project management staff here in DOT. They participate in the meetings, for example, in the RFI process so that they can hear firsthand some of the feedback we were getting. They also participate during the review process of our RFPs. The national expertise that they bring to the table is very helpful to us in being able to get us information.

In addition they have been a tremendous ally in advocating for us with the Secretary of Transportation to bring that additional funding through grants to Rhode Island. And just in the last six months we've gotten, nearly \$600 million between this project and other projects in competitive grants where we're competing with other states.

**Q: Given that we know that MBTA has no LPA of the six proposals that include connecting Florida directly with Providence by rail and no existing tracks, will there be a discussion on bus rapid transit with a dedicated right of way for the new bridge?**

A: We'll open up the discussion to see whether it makes sense during the design and evaluate that. We'll certainly make that part of our design and review process.

**Q: Are we paying to have three wreckers sitting on the westbound side when we don't have tow trucks or wreckers at construction sites around the state? It seems to be a large amount of money, wasted for the taxpayers.**

A: We are removing cars that would have either been there for an accident or could not wait any longer.

The tow trucks have been a very effective strategy. A 5 or 6 minute savings during an accident and getting it cleared from the site is literally thousands of vehicles and minutes that are saved every time there's an accident. We're saving people time by getting them cleared quickly and wreckers have been very effective by being out there and being able to get to the accident, clear off the road and getting the road open back to traffic. It's working because we're clearing these accidents very quickly and getting them off the road faster than we ever have before.

**Q: Why in the world have we rebuilt bridge decks all over the state on crumbling footings that, merely have stucco, placed over rotting rebar, and it's already showing through?**

A: We have not. We have not built new bridges on footings that were rotting to the point where they were incapable of withstanding the pressures for the duration of the life of the infrastructure that's above it. We have done repairs to structures that have had rotting concrete and we have patched them, which is a standard practice throughout the United States.

It's merely there to protect the concrete from the elements so that in the event that the reinforcing steel becomes uncovered, then recovering it is a proper thing to do in order to preserve it longer and to make the bridge last longer. That is a standard preservation technique. And where you see that happening, it is merely being done as a preservation.

**Q: Are there any discussions of tolling to pay for this bridge failure?**

A: No.

**Q: Are there any additional regulatory approvals that are going to hold us up, especially now that we're doing a complete rebuild?**

A: Our project managers and our project consultants have all been engaging with the various regulatory agencies that have anything to do with the demolition in the reconstruction, including, agencies like the CRMC, the federal EPA, the federal Fish and Wildlife authorities, the Coast Guard, and other agencies. We're in close contact with all of them coordinating the process so they know exactly what our schedule is and what permits are coming up. They are providing guidance to us in advance of us submitting our applications. And so far, they have all been cooperating in issuing the various permits that we need on a very timely basis for this project.

They understand as well as you do and I do the importance of this project. And they're all working very cooperatively with us as partners, in order to get us some right information for us to properly apply. And, and meet their regulations. We're really pleased with that process for this project.

**Q: Have you thought of banning the companies for a future contract with the state who were involved in inspecting the bridge?**

A: Until we have really zeroed in on where the liability stands this is an open process. We have broadened outreach to areas outside of Rhode Island to companies that are outside of the geographic area.

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