

PLANNING CHALLENGE GRANT INITIATIVE

2006 PROJECT SUMMARY

Washington County Route 1 Corridor Transportation and Land Use Solutions

Project Sponsor: WCRPC, (Town of Charlestown, Financial Officer)

Contacts: [Sponsor]: Mr. Jeff Broadhead (401) 874-6493 [Statewide Planning Liaison]: Vin Flood (401) 222-1243

Challenge Grant Amount: \$113,650

Completed: September 2007 Products: Study Report available at: <http://www.planning.ri.gov/misc/pcgrants6.htm>

Background

In June 2006, the WCRPC received a grant from the RI State Planning Program for \$113,650 to conduct a study of the Route 1 Transportation Corridor from North Kingstown to Westerly. Through a competitive process, they selected a team comprised of the landscape architectural, planning and engineering firms of Gates, Leighton & Associates, Inc. of East Providence and Maguire Group Inc. of Providence to complete the study. Working with the five towns along Route 1, the Council wanted to examine land use, inter-modal transportation, safety, growth centers, transportation needs, and signage along the corridor.

Objectives and Process

Project Objectives:

1. Develop a unified vision for the Route 1 Corridor that will be helpful to towns as a guide for development, transportation and landscape changes.
2. Ensure visual preservation of desired scenic areas, threatened landscapes and rural qualities along Route 1 in Washington County.
3. Develop mutually agreed upon design guidelines that can be used by all towns to preserve the rural character along the Route 1 Corridor.
4. Investigate transportation, traffic safety and land use solutions along the Route 1 Corridor. Study inter-modal transportation options.

Major Accomplishments and Recommendations

Major Accomplishments:

- Conducted several public meetings with residents and officials of all five towns to help develop a character or identity of the corridor and what features or characteristics of the corridor are worth protecting, changing or developing.
 - Developed a unified vision for the corridor that will:
 - "allow for the preservation of historic rural character and natural resources through sustainable growth that also supports economic vitality of the area, serving residents, businesses and visitors"
 - Identified the character of the corridor, including data collection on:
 - Historic Perspective
 - Built and Natural Environments
 - Demographics
 - Historic and Cultural Resources
 - Inter-modal Transportation Network
 - Regional Growth Patterns
 - Employment Centers
 - Identified Municipal and State programs and regulations in place along the corridor, including a comprehensive summary of zoning ordinances in the five towns along the corridor
 - Developed a GIS atlas of the corridor, including:
 - Roadside character mapping identifying views and vistas along the corridor
 - Vegetation management plan mapping
 - Several conceptual drawings showing various transportation and land use recommendations
- Developed a town by town recommendations and required actions table to help achieve transportation and land use solutions and the unified vision for the corridor
- ##### Major Recommendations:

- Identified transportation and land use solutions for the corridor consistent with Rhode Island State Guide Plan Elements
- Recommendations to preserve rural character:

- Scenic highway designation and overlay district
- Protection of important landscapes through:
 - TDR
 - Property acquisition
 - Conservation easements
- Vegetation management Plan:
 - Protecting corridor vegetation
 - Selective Clearing
- Access management and traffic safety recommendations:
 - Minimize conflict points at driveway locations
 - Continued reduction of median breaks
- Recommendations to develop new inter-modal connections:
 - Wickford Junction TOD
 - Charlestown increased RIPTA service
 - Narragansett increased RIPTA service to Galilee and BI ferry
- Recommendations to achieve corridor cohesion through:
 - A unified sign program
 - Village scale design ordinances
 - Protection of historic and archeological resources

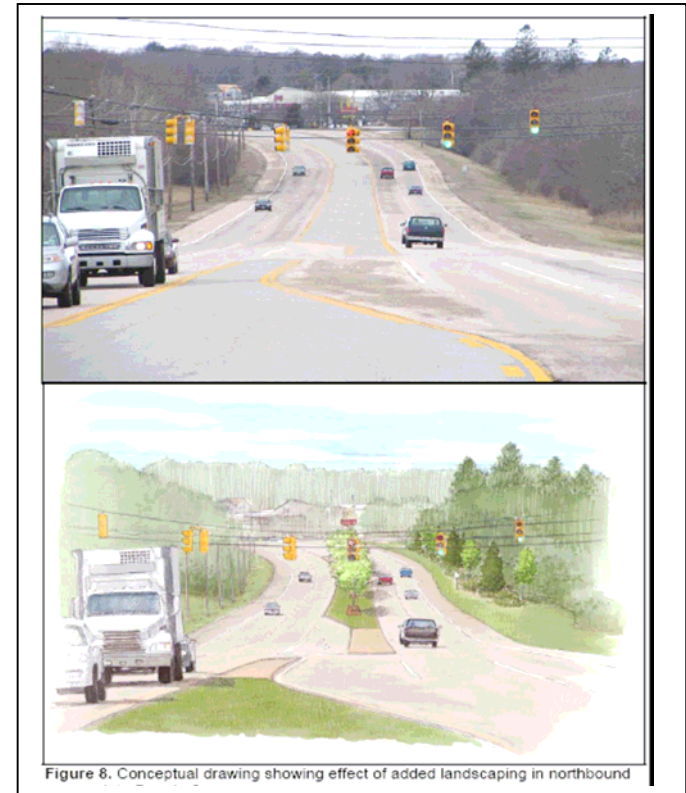


Figure 8. Conceptual drawing showing effect of added landscaping in northbound



Figure 11. Possible changes to the Route 1 and Route 4 intersection to improve safety.

Next Steps

In order to further the transportation and land use solutions recommended for the corridor in the report, municipalities will need to work cooperatively by:

- Amending comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances and subdivision and land development regulations.
- Following the detailed recommendations and required actions identified in this report.
- Implementing and investing in a comprehensive program to achieve the shared vision of the corridor.

Funding for the Challenge Grant Initiative is provided by the Federal Highway Administration.

